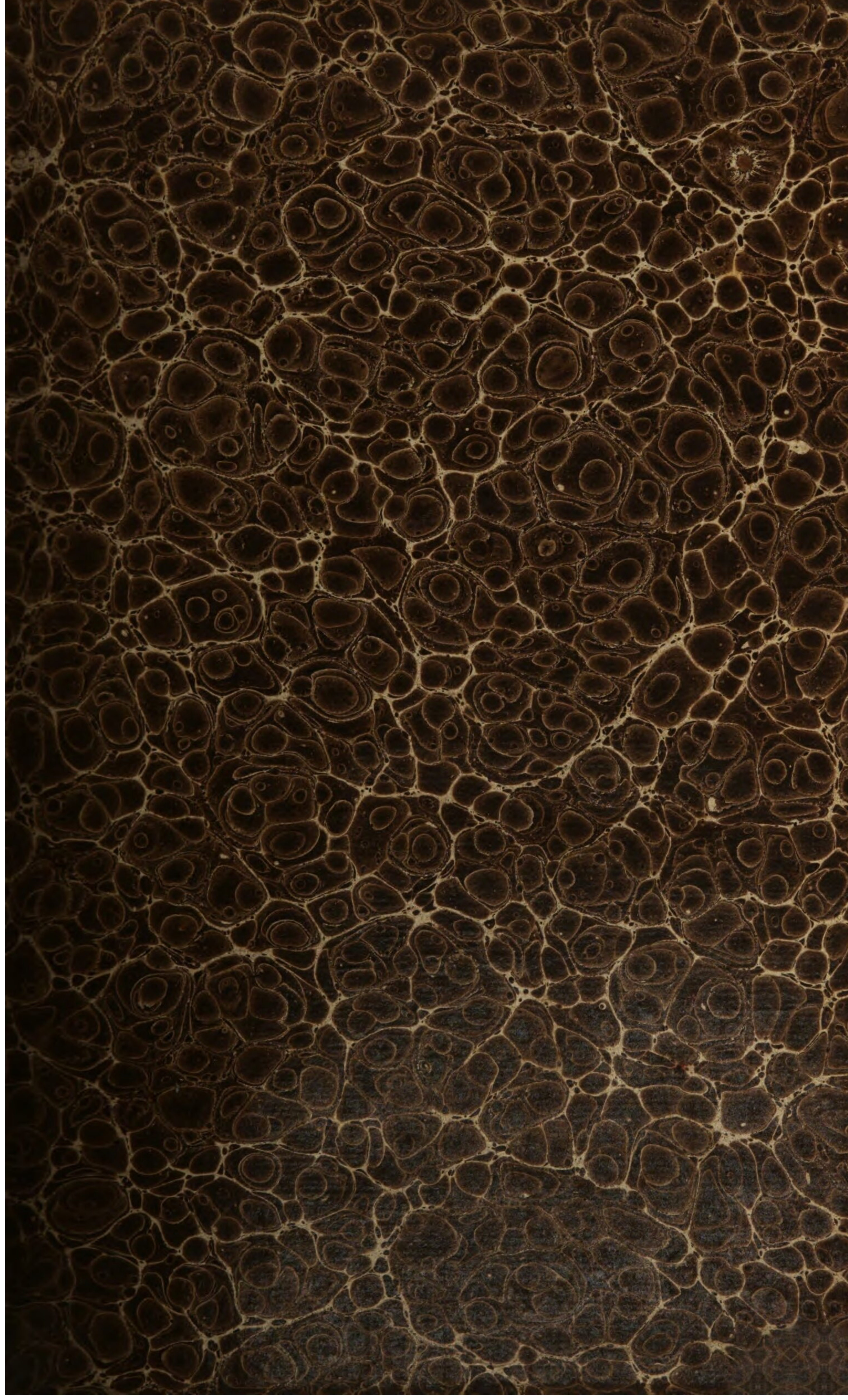


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IN THREE PARTS.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF SCRIPTURE:

I. FROM THE GEOGRAPHY
II. FROM THE NATURAL
HISTORY OF THE EAST.

III. FROM THE CUSTOMS
ANCIENT AND MODERN
NATIONS.

IN

BY

THE REV. GEORGE PAXTON,

THREE PARTS.

PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY TO THE FREE CHURCH SYNOD, AND
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL, EDINBURGH.

SECOND EDITION,

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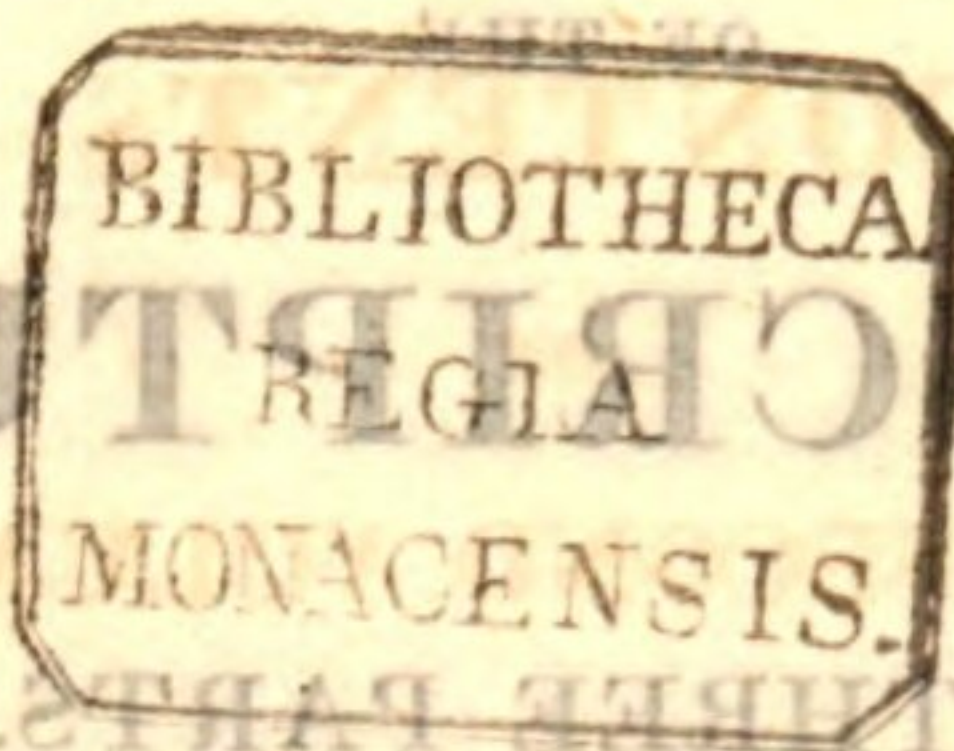
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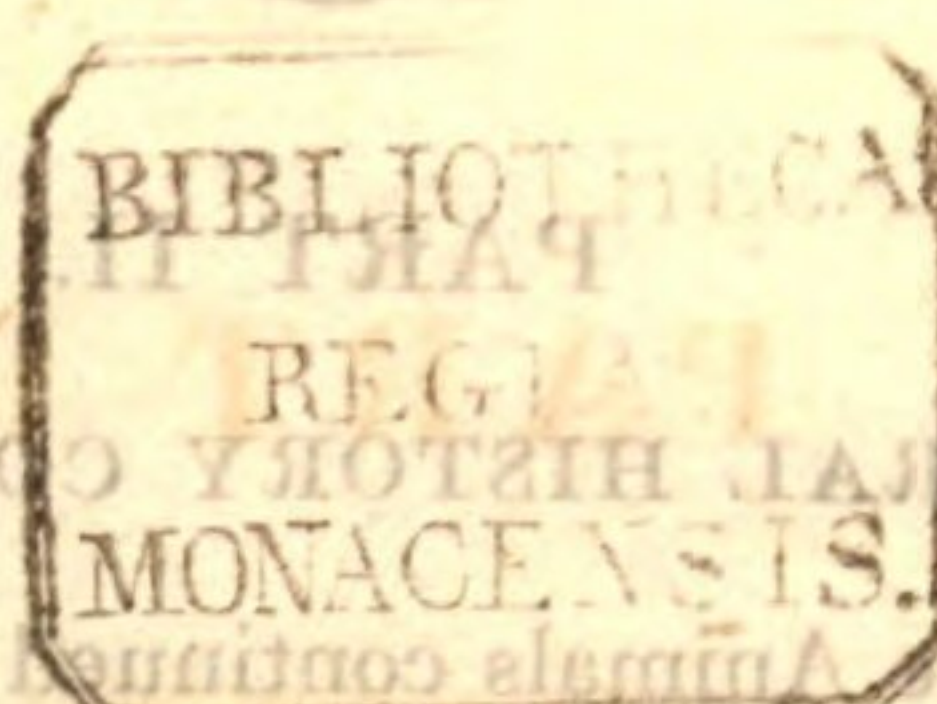
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PART II.

(CONTINUED.)

OF THE

NATURAL HISTORY OF THE EAST.

The Ox.
The ox, which the natural historians have ranked among the domestic animals, without regard to sex, is one of the most precious and useful to man, among the herbivorous animals. Easily tamed, and of a gentle and placid temper, he is maintained at small expense; and while he consumes but little, he enriches and improves the ground from which he draws his subsistence. He patiently bends his neck to the yoke, and exerts his great muscular strength in bearing our burdens, in preparing our fields for the seed, and to this day in eastern regions, in separating the chaff from the grain, after he has assisted in gathering in the harvest. The milk of the herd supplies us with a rich and pleasant beverage; the flesh with a nutritious food; the skin forms

NATURAL HISTORY OF THE EAST.

OF THE

(CONTINUED.)

PART II.

ILLUSTRATIONS

OF

SCRIPTURE,

IN THREE PARTS, &c.

CHAP. VII.

TAME ANIMALS CONTINUED.

The Ox.—The Sheep.—The Goat.—The Dog.—The Hog.

The Ox.

THE ox, by which the natural historian means black cattle in general, without regard to sex, is one of the most precious and useful to man, among the herbivorous animals. Easily tamed, and of a gentle and placid temper, he is maintained at small expense ; and while he consumes but little, he enriches and improves the ground from which he draws his subsistence. He patiently lends his neck to the yoke, and exerts his great muscular strength in bearing our burdens, in preparing our fields for the seed, and, to this day in eastern regions, in separating the chaff from the grain, after he has assisted in gathering in the harvest. The milk of the herd supplies us with a rich and pleasant beverage ; the flesh with a nutritious food ; the skin forms

a part of our covering, and in many parts of the world, still contributes to the defence of warriors in the day of battle. Scarcely a part of this animal indeed can be named, which is not daily rendered subservient to the purposes of utility or elegance.^a In the patriarchal ages, the ox constituted no inconsiderable portion of their wealth ; and he is still the basis of the riches of nations, which in general flourish only in proportion to the cultivation of their territories, and the number of their cattle. In these, all real wealth consists ; for silver and gold are only representations of riches, possessing in themselves little intrinsic value. These remarks are verified, by the notice which the sacred writers take of the ox, when they describe the wealth of primordial generations : “ Abraham,” say they, “ was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.” “ The Lord has blessed my master greatly,” said the steward of Abraham’s house, “ and he is become great ; and he has given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and men-servants, and maid-servants, and camels, and asses.”^b Similar language is used in relation to the riches of Jacob : “ The man increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maid-servants, and men-servants, and camels, and asses.”^c Another instance only shall be given from the book of Job : “ His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she-asses, and a very great household ; so that the man was the greatest of all the men in the east.”^d So highly valued was this animal, that it

^a Buffon’s Nat. Hist. vol. iii, p. 423, 433. Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. viii, cap. 70. Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. ii, cap. 57. Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, p. 273–318.

^b Gen. xxiv, 35. ^c Ch. xxx, 43. ^d Job i, 3.

was not thought too mean a present for a king to make in ancient times to his ally: for Moses informs us, that “Abimelech took sheep, and oxen, and men-servants, and women-servants, and gave them to Abraham.”^e Soon after, these eminent personages entered into a treaty with each other, and, on that occasion, Abraham “took sheep, and oxen, and gave them to Abimelech.”

The ox, especially when fattened, is of a rounder form than any other domestic animal; a circumstance which has given him a name in the Hebrew text. The beauty of his shape has been celebrated in the lines of heathen poets, and acknowledged in the dictates of inspiration. In the prophecies of Jeremiah, the kingdom of Egypt is compared to “a very fair heifer;”^f and the same allusion is involved in these words of Hosea: “And Ephraim is an heifer that is taught, and loveth to tread out the corn; but I passed over upon her fair neck.”^g The beauty of the heifer has been sung by the prince of Italian poets:

“Pascitur in magnis sylvis formosa juvenca.” 3 *Geor.* l. 219.

And by Ovid,

“Victima labe carens et præstantissima forma.” *Met.* lib. xv.

An air of grandeur and majesty has been remarked in the motions and attitudes of the bull, and a certain generosity in his aspect, which the Latin bard celebrates in these terms:

——— “torvæque decorus
Frontis honos.”

Homer had long before sung the praise of bovine excellence:

Ἡς τε βεῖς ἀγέληφι μέγ' ἐξοχος ἐπλετο πάντων

Ταυρὸς: ὃ γὰρ τε βοῖσσι μεταπρέπει ἀγρομένησι. 2 *Il.* l. 480.

^e Gen. xx, 14.

^f Jer. xlvi, 20.

^g Hos. x, 11.

These high authorities justify the figure which Moses employs, in the blessing which he pronounces on the tribe of Joseph: "His glory is like the firstling of his bullock;" the generosity of his heart, and the majesty of his presence, were conspicuous in the amiable and dignified father of that tribe, the preserver of his family, and an eminent type of our gracious Redeemer.

The playful disposition of a young ox, the son of the herd, as the Hebrews beautifully call him, has been remarked by writers of every age.

——— ἐπὶ τὴν βοτάνης κορυσσάνται

Πασαὶ ἀμα σκαιοῦσιν ἐναντία.

Odys. lib. ix.

Their wanton gambols on the soft grass, is thus described by Theocritus:

Ὀρχεῖντ' ἐν μαλακᾷ ται πόρῃς αὖθις ποῖα.

Νίκη μαν ὃς ἄλλος, ἀνασσατοὶ δ' ἐγένοντο.^h

It is therefore with strict propriety, the Hebrew bard compares the shaking of the earth, and the reeling of the mountains with all their forests, when Jehovah descended in terrible majesty, to deliver the law from the top of Sinai, to the friskings of a young calf: "He maketh them also to skip like a calf: Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn."ⁱ The prophet Jeremiah is supposed, by ancient interpreters, to refer to the same circumstance, where he foretels the ruin of Babylon: "Because ye were glad, because ye rejoiced, O ye destroyers of mine heritage; because ye are grown fat," or sport, "as the heifer at grass, and bellow as bulls." A similar allusion is made by Malachi, when he describes the glorious appearance of the promised Messiah, and the joy of his people: "But unto you that fear my name, shall the sun of righteousness arise

^h Idyll. vi, l. 45, 46.

ⁱ Psalm xxix, 6.

with healing in his wings ; and ye shall go forth and grow up, or gambol, as calves of the stall.”^j

The strength of the bull is too remarkable to require description ; and his courage and fierceness are so great, that he ventures at times to combat the lion himself.^k Nor is he more celebrated for these qualities, than for his disposition to unite with those of his own kind against their common enemy. For these reasons, he has been chosen by the Spirit of inspiration, to symbolize the powerful, fierce, and implacable enemies of our blessed Redeemer ; who, forgetting their personal animosities, combined against his precious life, and succeeded in procuring his crucifixion : “ Many bulls have compassed me : strong bulls of Bashan have beset me around.”^l Nor can we conceive a more striking and appropriate symbol of a fierce and ruthless warrior ; an instance of which occurs in that supplication of David : “ Rebuke the company of the spearmen, the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the people, till every one submit himself with pieces of silver.”^m In the sublime description of Isaiah, which seems to refer to some great revolutions, which are to be effected in times long posterior to the age in which he flourished ; probably in these last days, antecedent to the millennial state of the church ; the complete destruction of her strong and cruel enemies is thus foretold : “ And the unicorns shall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls, and their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness.”ⁿ

The ox is a heavy and sluggish animal, blunt in his feelings, and almost destitute of sagacity ; yet he may be

^j Mal. iv, 2.

^k Bochart. Hieroz. vol. ii, lib. ii, c. 28, p. 279.

^l Psa. xxii, 12.

^m Psa. lxxviii, 31.

ⁿ Isa. xxxiv, 7.

subdued to the yoke, taught to recognize his master, and to persevere with patient industry in his service. It is therefore, with peculiar force and beauty, the prophet contrasts his character and actions, with the dispositions and behaviour of Israel ; who, although taught by God more than the beasts of the field, had, by yielding to their vicious propensities, become more brutish than the dullest and most stupid of the lower animals : “ The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib ; but Israel doth not know, my people do not consider.”^o

In the rutting season, the bull, naturally bold and untractable, becomes quite ungovernable, and often furious, especially when it is attempted to subject him to restraint. It is, therefore, with peculiar energy, that the prophet represents the sons of Zion in the days of their calamity, as lying at the head of all the streets, like a wild bull in a net : raging and struggling to break their toils, but entangling themselves still the more, and rendering their condition worse, by their own violent passions, and useless exertions.

The ox, like other inferior animals, is neither tormented by reflecting on the past, nor guessing at the future ; he grazes without fear or doubt, amidst the green pastures, and fattens for the knife, unconscious of the doom that awaits him : and when his owner comes and leads him away to the slaughter, his brute imagination only figures a richer meadow, or a more agreeable companion. Equally unconscious and cheerful is the miserable youth, whom an abandoned woman has entangled in her toils, and leads away to forbidden pleasures. He is not aware of his danger, and his misery : he goes with blind infatuation,

^o Isa. i, 3.

and pitiable mirth to his destruction : “ He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks.”^p

The prevailing colour among the herds in the east is red. This fact is attested by Pindar in these lines :

Μηλα τεγαρ τοι εγω

Και βοων ξανθας αγελας αφημι.

Pyth. 4.

“ I leave thee, flocks and red herds of oxen.” And when he offered a hecatomb to Neptune, a red herd of Thracian bulls was the present :

Φοινισσα δε Θρηικιων αγελα ταυρων

ἔπαρχεν.^q

Under the law, Jehovah commanded a red heifer to be offered as a kind of sin offering, to purify from certain legal defilements. The animal was killed, and then burnt without the camp, (as the sin offering was upon the great day of atonement), and the blood sprinkled seven times directly before the tabernacle, although it was not shed at the altar. The law of Moses only required, that the heifer should be red, and young, without spot and blemish ; and which had never been subjected to the yoke. To these plain instructions, the Jews added an infinite number of niceties and exceptions, in choosing a heifer, for this offering. If she was not perfectly red, without the mixture of any other colour ; if she had but two hairs black or white,—she was reckoned unfit for the purpose.

Why the law demands a young cow rather than a bullock, (which was commonly preferred by the divine legislator,) and why one perfectly red, it is not easy to deter-

^p Prov. vii, 22.

^q See also Theocriti Idyll. iv. That bull indeed is lean and red.

mine. It is the opinion of some learned men, that this precept was given to preserve the people of Israel from the religion of the Egyptians, who honoured the cow as an animal sacred to Isis; and by consequence, abhorred the thought of presenting her at the altar. For this reason, it is supposed, Jehovah commanded a cow to be burnt, rather than a bullock; and one perfectly red, because that colour was held in great abhorrence by the Egyptians, who fancied that Typhon, in their superstition the source of all evil, was of this colour, and therefore they offered him red oxen in sacrifice. But it is doubtful, whether those superstitions, recorded by Plutarch and Herodotus, existed in the days of Moses; and still more, that the divine lawgiver, if he had any respect to the Egyptian rites, would have appointed so great a number of sacrifices, without any regard to colour, and mentioned it only in this instance, which was not a proper sacrifice. Lewis,^r and other writers imagine, that the difficulty of finding a red cow, without the least intermixture of any other hair, was the reason of the appointment. But it is not easy to conceive, why God, in this instance, had respect chiefly to the great difficulty of procuring a heifer of the required colour. In all his other appointments, the gracious lawgiver seems to have consulted the ease and convenience of his people, by requiring them to offer in his service what was at hand, and what they could easily afford. The difficulty of finding a heifer perfectly red, cannot then be admitted as the true reason of that appointment: nor has any satisfactory account been given, why the heifer was preferred on this occasion before the bullock. Some pious expositors consider the heifer as a type

^r Antiq. of the Heb. Repub. vol. ii, p. 510.

of our blessed Redeemer : its unblemished perfection, represented his immaculate purity, and sinless excellence ; its red colour, indicated the relation of Christ to our family, descended from Adam, that is, a man formed of red earth : the shedding of his own blood for the sins of his people, and the complete victory which he has gained over all their enemies, whose blood he has sprinkled upon his vesture ; its freedom from the yoke, his voluntary, his unrestrained devoting of himself to the work of redemption. No doubt can be reasonably entertained, that the burning of the red heifer did prefigure the sufferings and death of Christ ; and the purifying efficacy of her collected ashes, mixed in water, the cleansing energy of his blood ; for it is the blood of Christ alone that cleanseth from all sin.

The grass of the field, and the young shoots and leaves of the forest, supply the ox with food, which he collects by a peculiar action of his tongue, and devours in large quantities, with great rapidity.^s The first circumstance is mentioned by the Psalmist as an additional aggravation in the grovelling idolatry of Israel : “ They changed their glory into the similitude of an ox, that eateth grass.”^t Disregarding the dictates of reason, which had been planted in their bosoms by the inspiration of God, they exchanged the glorious manifestations or symbols of the divine presence, with which they were still favoured, into the form of an ox, which their Egyptian oppressors had exalted to the rank of a god, and absurdly worshipped ; a stupid and irrational animal, doomed by his Maker to fix his brute countenance on the ground, to which both

^s Varro de Re Rust. lib. ii, c. 5. Columella, lib. vii, cap. 3.

^t Ps. cvi, 20.

his soul and body return, and to subsist on the coarsest fare.

“To eat grass like an ox,”^u was a part of that signal punishment which the most High inflicted on the proud and tyrannical king of Babylon. Deprived of reason, which he had so greatly abused, and resigned to the full influence of bestial appetites, he was hurled from his throne and dignity, and expelled from the society of mankind, to roam naked in the open fields, exposed, like the herd with which he associated, to all the inclemencies of the heavens, and forced like them to feed on grass; a dreadful lesson to the oppressors of every succeeding age. To the second circumstance, or the manner in which the ox collects his food, the quantity which he devours, and the rapidity with which he eats down the pasture, the king of Moab alludes in his address to the elders of Midian, on the dangers to which their country was exposed from the dreaded invasion of the Israelitish armies: “And Moab said unto the elders of Midian, Now shall this company lick up all that are round about us, as the ox licketh up the grass of the field.”^v

In Egypt large herds of cattle are seen pasturing on the margin of the river. Those of the buffalo kind appear to be almost amphibious: during the heat of the day, such as are not employed in husbandry recline in the water with their whole frame immersed, except the head; and long strings of them traverse the current where it is broadest and most rapid, with the ease and regularity of an aquatic fowl. These were probably the “kine” which Pharaoh beheld in his dream as they “came up out of the river.”^w

^u Dan. iv, 29.

^v Num. xxii, 4.

^w Gen. xli, 3. Letters from Egypt, p. 254.

Under the special care of oriental husbandmen, the ox, in seasons of plenty, was regaled with a mixture of chaff, chopped straw, and various kinds of grain, carefully winnowed and moistened with subacid water. Such is the meaning of that prediction : “ The oxen likewise and the young asses, that ear the ground, shall eat clean (or subacid) provender, which hath been winnowed with the shovel and with the fan.”^x When the Lord returns to bless his repenting people, so rich and abundant shall be the produce of their fields, that the lower animals which toil in the service of man, and have assigned for their subsistence the very refuse of the harvest, shall share in the general plenty, and feed on provender, carefully separated from all offensive matters, and adapted to their taste. But, among the Jews, this animal fed most luxuriously when employed in treading out the corn ; for the divine law, in many of whose precepts the benevolence of Deity conspicuously shines, forbade to muzzle him, and by consequence, to prevent him from eating even to satiety of the grain which he was employed to separate from the husk. This allusion is involved in the prophet’s address to the ten tribes, in which he warns them, that the abundance and tranquillity which they had so long enjoyed, should not exempt them from the punishments due to their multiplied crimes. Despising the frugal and laborious life of their ancestors, they had become slothful and voluptuous, like an ox that declines to bend his neck any longer to the yoke, and loves the easier employment of treading out the corn, where he riots without restraint in the accumulated bounties of Heaven : “ Ephraim is as an heifer that is taught, (or has become nice and delicate,) and loveth

^x Isa. xxx, 24.

to tread out the corn: but I passed over upon her fair neck."^y

Men of every age and country, have been much indebted to the labours of this animal; he was the first that resigned his neck to the yoke and his back to the load,^z that extended the prospects, and multiplied or enlarged the comforts of the rising nations.^a So early as the days of Job, who was probably the contemporary of Isaac, "the oxen were ploughing, and the asses feeding beside them," when the Sabeans fell upon them and took them away.^b In times long posterior, when Elijah was commissioned to anoint Elisha, the son of Shaphat, prophet in his stead, he found him ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen.^c For many ages, the hopes of oriental husbandmen depended entirely on their labours; this was so much the case in the time of Solomon, that he observes in one of his proverbs, "Where no oxen are the crib is clean, or rather empty; but much increase is by the strength of the ox."^d The ass, in the course of ages, was compelled to bend his stubborn neck to the yoke, and share in his labours; but still, the preparation of the ground in the time of spring, chiefly depended on the more powerful exertions of the latter. This may be fairly inferred from

^y Hos. x, 11.

^z Maurice's Indian Antiq. vol. iv, p. 350. Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, cap. 31, p. 301.

^a The internal commerce of Hindostan has been in all ages carried on by means of oxen yoked to the wain, and, when greater dispatch was required, by means of the animal itself without the waggon. It is not unusual to lay upon his back 300 or 350 pounds weight. Maurice's Indian Antiq. vol. vi, p. 348.—So highly were his services prized in the East, that they elevated him to the rank of a god, and paid him religious homage. Ibid. vol. iv, p. 230, 231.

^b Job i, 14.

^c 1 Kings xix, 19.

^d Prov. xiv, 4.

the text, in which a preference, as might be expected, is given to the ox: "The oxen likewise and the young asses, that ear (or till) the ground, shall eat clean provender." The same inference may be drawn from the proverb of Solomon already quoted, in which he takes no notice of the ass, although it is more than probable, he had been yoked in the plough long before his reign. The superior importance of the ox, even in the light and sandy fields of Syria, is clearly signified in these words of Amos: "Shall horses run upon the rock; will one plough there with oxen."^e

In ancient Greece, the ox was engaged in the same labours, for Homer compares the two sons of Ajax to two black oxen, that with equal spirit, drag the compact plough in the fallow, while a profuse sweat issues from the bottom of their horns.

Αλλ' ὡς ἐν νείῳ βοε σινότε πηλὸν ἀροτρον

Ἴσον θυμὸν ἔχοντε τίτταινετον.

Il. lib. xiii, l. 703.

The Greek writers are eager to secure the honour of taming the ox, and yoking him in the plough, to their own nation; but they ascribe the work to so many gods and goddesses, heroes and great men, that it is evident, the benefactor must be sought for among a different people, and in a remoter age.^f The laws of Moses, which prohibited his people to join in the same yoke the ox and the ass, and the notice which the afflicted patriarch Job, who flourished long before his time, gives us of the "oxen ploughing," clearly prove, that the person who invented the plough and instructed the ox, existed long before the founders of the Grecian states. We may, with the page of inspiration for our guide, trace the invention to the first

^e Hos. vi, 22.

^f Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, cap. 32, p. 309.

descendants of our common father, one of whom was a shepherd, and the other a cultivator of the soil. Nor is the believer in Revelation permitted to assign the honour chiefly to them ; he is directed to ascribe it to the Spirit of the only wise God ; “ Give ye ear and hear my voice ; hearken and hear my speech. Doth the ploughman plough all day to sow ? doth he open and break the clods of his ground ? When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat, and the appointed barley, and the rye in their place ? For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him.”^g By direct revelation from Heaven, or the secret suggestion of his Spirit to the mind of Adam, or his son Cain, they were taught to construct the plough, and bend the pliant neck of the ox to the yoke. The importance of the lesson, confirmed by their own daily experience, they failed not to impress upon the minds of their offspring ; and thus, one generation transmitted to another, the valuable favour.

The ox was also compelled to submit, when the seed time was over, to the more severe labour of dragging the cart or the waggon. In the book of Numbers, the princes of Israel brought their offering before the Lord, six covered waggons and twelve oxen ; that is, six waggons each drawn by two oxen ; and in the same chapter, Moses “ gave two waggons and four oxen unto the sons of Gershon, according to their service ; and four waggons and eight oxen unto the sons of Merari, according to their service ;” that is, every waggon drawn by two oxen.^h The number of oxen commonly yoked in one cart, seems to have been two ; for the priests and diviners, whom the lords

^g Is. xxviii, 23, 24, 25.

^h Numb. vii, 3, 7, 8.

of the Philistines consulted about the captive ark of Jehovah, advised them to make a new cart, and yoke in it two milch kine, for the purpose of carrying back the dread symbol of divine majesty to the place appointed for its reception.ⁱ The new cart, in which the king of Israel and his people brought it up from the house of Amini-dab, seems also to have been drawn by two oxen, although the number is not so clearly stated.^j

It appears from Homer, that oxen and mules were the most common draught cattle in ancient Greece and the Lesser Asia; for the wood which formed the funeral pile of Hector, was conveyed in waggons drawn by oxen and mules:

οἱ δὲ πᾶμα ἄλυσαν βοῶν ἡμιόνους τε

Σευγυσσαν.

Il. lib. xxiv, l. 782.

The Roman poets speak of the practice in a manner which shews that it was common over all Italy. Thus Ovid:

“ Ipsa sedens plastro porta est invecta Capena

Sparguntur juncta flore recente boves.” *Lib. iv, Fast. v. 343.*

According to Tibullus, those that first yoked the ox in the draught, were Bacchus and Ceres:

“ Illi etiam tauros primi docuisse feruntur

Servitium et plastro supposuisse rotam.” *Lib. ii, eleg. 1.*

From the oriental regions, the custom quickly found its way into the remotest countries of the north. The Scythians, from time immemorial, have wandered over their unmeasured steppes in waggons drawn by oxen, and the ancient Sarmatians imitated their example:

“ Ducunt Sarmatici barbara plaustra boves.”^k

This strong and docile animal, was also taught to submit his shoulder to the heavy burden; for, at the acces-

ⁱ 1 Sam. vi, 7.

^j 2 Sam. vi, 3, 6.

^k Ovid. Trist. lib. iii, el. 10.

sion of David to the throne of Israel, the people brought “bread on asses and on camels, and on mules and on oxen.”^k He is less fitted, indeed, by the rotundity of his form, for this species of labour, than for those just mentioned, a circumstance stated by Cicero with his usual felicity: *Quid de bobus loquar, quorum ipsa terga declarant non esse se ad onus accipiendum figurata.* But although the very back of the ox, according to this elegant writer, declares that it has not been formed to receive a load, yet the concurring testimony of past ages, assures us that it is not altogether unfit for that purpose. Ælian observes, that the bull submits to the bier, and carries a boy or a girl on his neck, and a woman on his back.¹ The Roman authors mounted Bacchus on a bull, and made Europa travel in the same manner:

“Vexerat Europen fraterna per equora taurus:

At nunc Aleidem taurus in astra tulit.”^m

These quotations prove, that it was by no means uncommon to use the ox for burdens of every kind, and even for the saddle; a custom which Mr Bruce avers, is still practised among some African tribes. In Guzerat the oxen are perfectly white, with black horns, a skin delicately soft, and eyes rivalling those of the antelope in brilliant lustre. Those reared in the northern part of the province are noble animals, superior in size, strength and docility; some of them travel with a hackery, a vehicle for the conveyance of women and children, from thirty to forty miles a day; and are yoked to the carriages of wealthy Hindoos in distant parts of India. In sweetness

^k 1 Chron. xii, 40.

¹ De Nat. Animal. lib. vii, cap. 4. See also Potter's Gr. Antiq. vol. ii, p. 14.

^m Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, cap. 32, p. 313.

of temper and gentleness of manners they nearly resemble the elephant. Some of these oxen are valued at nearly two hundred pounds sterling.ⁿ

They were also employed in the barn-floor to drag the *tribulum* or *threshing* instrument over the sheaves in order to separate the grain from the chaff; or to tread out the corn with their feet; but labours of this kind, rather belong to another part of these Illustrations,—from the agricultural state of the East.

The flesh of the herd was not only used by the chosen people, but also reckoned, when young, one of their greatest delicacies. The patriarch Abraham accordingly, with ardent hospitality, entertained the angels under the oak at Mamre with “a calf, tender and good;”^o and the pythoness, at Endor, could think of nothing so delicious and acceptable to set before Saul, as a calf fattened in treading out the corn.^p The young of the herd, were numbered among the blessings which Jehovah promised to bestow upon his ransomed people, and classed with the choicest viands: The father of the family in the parable, had nothing more delicious to set before his repentant son, than the fatted calf:^q “Therefore, they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd; and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all.”^r The voluptuous nobles of Israel, in the days of Amos, lay upon beds of ivory, and

ⁿ Forbes's Orient. Mem. vol. iii, p. 99.

^o Gen. xviii, 7.

^p 1 Sam. xxviii, 24.

^q Luke xv, 23.

^r Jer. xxxi, 12.

stretched themselves upon their couches, and ate the lambs out of the flock, “and the calves out of the midst of the stall.”^s It is obviously the design of the indignant prophet to inform us, that the nobles and princes of his degenerate country, indulged, without restraint, in every sensual gratification which luxury could suggest, and riches procure.

In times of primeval simplicity, when mankind, in general, almost constantly engaged in hazardous pursuits, or toilsome occupations, required for their sustenance a very large quantity of solid and nutritious food, the full-grown ox himself was forced to contribute a principal part of every public entertainment. When Adonijah seized the sceptre of Israel, he “slew sheep and oxen and fat cattle; and called all his brethren, the king’s sons, and all the men of Israel, the king’s servants:”^t the son of Shaphat made a feast equally substantial, when he was invested with the prophetic office;^u abundance of “oxen and sheep” were provided for the great and splendid entertainment at the coronation of David;^v and when Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went down to visit Ahab the king of Israel at Samaria, the latter killed sheep and oxen for him in abundance, and for the people that were with him.”^w This was the kind of feast in which they chiefly delighted; from which they could be deterred neither by the denunciations of divine judgment, nor the terrors of immediate invasion: “And in that day did the Lord God of hosts call to weeping and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth; and behold, joy and gladness,

^s Amos vi, 4.

^t 1 Kings i, 9.

^u Chap. xix, 21.

^v 1 Chron. xii, 40.

^w 2 Chron. xviii, 2.

slaying oxen and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine."^x The same custom seems to have continued to the very close of their national state; for, in the parable of the marriage-feast, the invitation runs: "Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come unto the marriage."^y In the feasts of Homer, we discover the same kind of preparations; in every entertainment, the fatted ox is the principal article, and not unfrequently, the sole dish at table. This remarkable coincidence in the customs of two nations so distant from each other, proves its general prevalence among the people of the east.^z

Many of them, however, like the modern Hindoos, abstained entirely from the use of flesh. The Egyptians and Phœnicians, we are assured by Porphyry, would rather have devoured a human victim, than tasted the flesh of an ox. The Cyrenian and African shepherds, if the testimony of Herodotus is entitled to credit, refused to shed the blood of an ox, or to eat his flesh;^a and, according to Ælian, if a Phrygian killed an ox which had been yoked in the plough, he was punished with death.^b The same law formerly existed in Greece. The ox, says Varro, is the companion of men in the labours of the field, and the minister of Ceres; the ancients, therefore, felt so great an interest in his preservation, that they inflicted capital punishment on his destroyer.^c The poets of Greece and Rome contend, that in the golden and silver ages, when mankind lived agreeably to nature, in simplicity and

^x Isa. xxii, 13.

^y Matth. xxii, 4.

^z Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, cap. 32, p. 313, 314.

^a Hist. lib. i, cap. 100.

^b De Nat. Animal. lib. xii, cap. 34.

^c De Re Rust. lib. ii, cap. 5.

innocence, they refused to stain their hands with a bullock's blood; and that this nefarious practice entered with the brazen, or, according to some, with the iron age, when degenerate man, become cruel and voracious, gave way to every vicious propensity.

“Ante etiam sceptrum Dictæi regis et ante
Impia quam cæsis gens est epulata juvencis.” 2 Geor. l. 536.

But so inconsistent are the conduct and sentiments of these renowned heathens, that while, like the Hindoos of modern times, they shuddered at the thought of spilling the blood or tasting the flesh of a bullock, they reckoned it no crime in most cases, to shed the blood of a fellow-creature; they felt no reluctance to sacrifice the life of a neighbour in private revenge, or in public sacrifice, nor to light up the flames of war, and riot in the carnage of battle. But to these mawkish refinements of heathen sages and poets, we have to oppose the example of Abraham, Elisha, Josiah, and a multitude of others, equally venerable for their wisdom and their holiness. And, what is infinitely more, we have to oppose the express grant of Jehovah himself, who made, and who graciously takes care of oxen: “Every moving thing,” said he to Noah, “shall be meat for you; even as the green herb, have I given you all things.”^d This grant was long afterwards confirmed to Israel in the wilderness in these terms; “These are the beasts which ye shall eat; the ox, the sheep, and the goat.”^e The products of the dairy are scarcely less valuable; but these are so well known, and the texts of Scripture which allude to them so perspicuous, as to render any remarks upon them unnecessary.^f

^d Gen. ix, 3.

^e Deut. xiv, 4.

The curious reader may consult Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, cap. 315–317.

The Sheep.

The Syrian sheep are of two kinds; the Bedouin, which differ in no respect from the larger kind of sheep in Britain, except that their tails are somewhat longer and thicker; the other is a kind often mentioned by travellers, on account of their extraordinary tails, which are very broad and large, according to Ælian,^g a foot and an half in breadth. In Arabia the tails of one kind of sheep are not less than four feet and an half in length, terminating in a small appendix, which turns back upon them. These tails are of a substance between fat and marrow, and are not eaten separately, but mixed with the lean meat in many of the Syrian dishes; they are also frequently used instead of butter. A common sheep of this kind (without the head, feet, skin, and entrails), weighs sixty or seventy English pounds, of which the tail usually weighs fifteen pounds and upwards.^h This species is far the most numerous, both in Syria and in Palestine, and was probably the kind which bled on the Jewish altars. The extraordinary size and deliciousness of their tails, give additional importance to the law in which Moses commands, that when a sacrifice of peace offerings should be made by fire unto the Lord, the fat which was reserved as sacred to God, and particularly the whole rump or tail taken off hard by the back bone, should be burnt upon the altar.ⁱ To command, by an express law, the tail of a British sheep to be offered in sacrifice to God, might well surprise us; but the wonder ceases when we are told of those broad

^g De Nat. Animal. lib. iii, cap. 3, and lib. x, cap. 4.

^h Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. vi, p. 203. Russel's Hist. of Aleppo, vol. ii, p. 147.

ⁱ Lev. iii, 9.

tailed eastern sheep, and the extreme delicacy of that part which was so particularly specified in the statute.^j

In a wild state, or when suffered to rove undisturbed in extensive pastures, the sheep is a robust and active animal, and capable of enduring, without injury, great fatigue. His talents, it must be admitted, are not so brilliant as those of some other quadrupeds; but he does not appear to be that stupid, defenceless, timid creature, which Buffon represents him in his elaborate pages.^k It has been justly observed, that all tame animals lose a portion of that sagacity, dexterity, and courage, which they are obliged to exert against their enemies in a wild state, because they have long been accustomed to rely upon the protection of man. Sheep, when enslaved by men, tremble at the voice of the shepherd or his dog. But on those extensive mountains, where they are allowed to range almost without control, and where they seldom depend on the shepherd's aid, they display a very different character: animated by a spirit of liberty and independence, a ram, or a wedder, in this situation, boldly attacks a single dog, and often comes off victorious. But when the danger is more alarming, like a warlike animal of a higher order, they trust not to the prowess of individuals, but have recourse to the collected strength and energy of the whole flock. On such occasions, they draw up into one compact body; they place the young and the females in the centre; and the strongest males take the foremost ranks, keeping close by the side of one another. Thus an armed front is presented on all quarters, and in this manner they wait with firmness and intrepidity the approach of the foe. Nor does

^j Harm. vol. iii, p. 329. Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, p. 421.

^k Nat. Hist. vol. iii, p. 463.

their courage fail them in the moment of attack ; for if the aggressor advance within a few yards of the line, the rams dart upon him with irresistible impetuosity, and either lay him dead at their feet, or put him to instant flight. Against the attacks of single dogs or foxes, they are, in this situation, perfectly secure. A ram, regardless of danger, often engages a bull, and seldom fails to conquer him ; for the bull, by lowering his head, without being sensible of his defenceless condition, receives between his horns the stroke of his adversary, which commonly brings him to the ground. The ram, therefore, is not so contemptible an enemy as inaccurate observers are apt to suppose. The account of his sagacity, firmness, and courage in the hour of danger, which has been now given, entirely justifies the inspired writers in comparing the rich and the powerful to the rams of the flock. When the prophet Ezekiel says in the name of the Lord : “ Behold, I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he-goats,” he intimates that the great men, by extortion and oppression, impoverished their neighbours, left them almost without subsistence, and were so vexatious to them, that they could not enjoy, with satisfaction, the little they were suffered to retain. Their oppressors were strong, and courageous, and impetuous, as the rams before the flock in the hour of danger ; but it was not for the defence of the weak and helpless, but for their own aggrandizement, and the gratification of their own low and vicious propensities. The prophet alludes to the flock, in his figurative description of the vengeance which Jehovah threatened to execute on the enemies of his church : “ The sword of the Lord is filled with blood ; it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats,

with the fat of the kidneys of rams ; for the Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea.”¹ The lambs and the goats, or the great body of the people, and the rams, by which the prophet means their princes and rulers, shall fall in the day of the Lord’s anger, by one indiscriminate slaughter. “The great men and the mighty men, and the chief captains,” shall become as easy a prey as the weakest and the most helpless of the community; “for who may abide the day of his coming; and who shall stand when he doth this?”

This animal, although generally simple and harmless, becomes, in a rich pasture, so petulant, as to occasion considerable inconvenience, and even danger, to man and some other creatures.^m The ram, in particular, loves to strike with his horn ; and many are the warnings in the strains of Grecian and Roman poets to beware of his attack. The vision of the ram, therefore, in the book of Daniel, perfectly accords with the character of that animal, which is no mean emblem of a warlike state. The prophet begins with a description of his form and position : “Then I lifted up mine eyes and saw, and behold there stood before the river a ram which had two horns, and the two horns were high ; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last.” His strength, activity, and courage are then brought within our view : “I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward : so that no beasts might stand before him : neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand ; but he did according to his will and became great.”ⁿ The two horns were the king-

¹ Isa. xxxiv, 6.

^m Varro de Re Rust. lib. ii, c. 1. Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. xii, c. 31.

ⁿ Dan. viii, 3, 4.

doms of Media and Persia ; of which the latter, although of more recent date, was by far the most powerful and celebrated. The symbolical ram was seen pushing westward, in the direction of Babylon, Syria, and Greece; northward, in the direction of the Lydians, Armenians, and Scythians; and southwards, in the direction of Arabia, Ethiopia, and Egypt. On all these nations did the Persian empire at one time or other direct the force of her arms; and at last she became so great and powerful, that no nation was able to resist her numerous and well appointed armies. Her victorious banners floated on the banks of the Indus and the Nile, and more than once carried desolation and dismay into the heart of Greece itself. The kings of Persia “ did according to their will;” they prospered in all their undertakings, and abroad and at home governed their prostrate subjects with absolute authority. None could escape the grasp of their power; none could save from destruction the victim of their displeasure. The extent of their dominions, the number of their subjects, the riches of their treasury, and the splendour of their court, had seldom been equalled; certainly never surpassed.

But, like every thing human, this mighty empire completed the term of its duration, and passed away. Bending under its own weight, and enervated by luxury, it fell an easy prey to the king of Macedon, who is represented in the next verse by the he-goat, than which a more appropriate emblem is not to be found in the kingdom of nature. “ The goat is superior to the sheep both in sentiment and dexterity; he is stronger, lighter, and more agile than the ram; he is sprightly, capricious, and given to wander; and it is with difficulty he can be confined to a flock. He loves to retire into solitude, to climb steep and

rugged places, to stand, even to sleep, on the points of rocks, and the edges of the most frightful precipices. He is robust, and easily nourished; for he eats almost every herb, and is injured by a very inconsiderable number. Though he seems to feel the effects of severe cold, he is not afraid of rain, or storms, or too great a degree of heat; he cheerfully exposes himself to the sun, and without inconvenience sleeps under its most ardent rays. But he is inconstant in his passions, and irregular in his actions. He walks, stops short, runs, leaps, approaches, retires, shews and conceals himself, or flies off as if he were actuated by mere caprice, and without any other cause than what arises from an eccentric vivacity of temper. The suppleness of his organs, and the strength and nervousness of his frame, are hardly sufficient to support the petulance and rapidity of his natural movements." Such is the character of the he-goat, as delineated by the masterly hand of Buffon;° and every one that recollects the history of the Macedonian hero, will at once see that it applies to his character and actions with admirable precision. It indicates with great justness the ardour, the activity, the patience, the fortitude, and the daring intrepidity of Alexander; the wild eccentricity of his temper, his delight in hazardous enterprise, and the amazing rapidity of his movements. The prophet goes on: "And as I was considering the character and actions of the ram, behold, an he-goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground; and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes, and I saw him come close unto the ram; and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns, and there was no power in the ram

° Nat. Hist. vol. iii, p. 491.

to stand before him ; but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him, and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand."

The surprising fecundity of the sheep has been celebrated by writers of every class. It has not escaped the notice of the royal Psalmist, who, in a beautiful ascription of praise to the living and the true God, entreats, that the sheep of his chosen people might "bring forth thousands and ten thousands in their streets."^p In another song of Zion, he represents, by a very elegant metaphor, the numerous flocks, covering like a garment the face of the field: "The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing."^q The bold figure is fully warranted by the prodigious numbers of sheep which whitened the extensive pastures of Syria and Canaan. In that part of Arabia which borders on Judea, the patriarch Job possessed at first seven thousand, and after the return of his prosperity, fourteen thousand sheep; and Mesha, the king of Moab, paid the king of Israel "a yearly tribute of an hundred thousand lambs, and an equal number of rams with the wool."^s In the war which the tribe of Reuben waged with the Hagarites, the former drove away "two hundred and fifty thousand sheep."^s At the dedication of the temple, Solomon offered in sacrifice, "an hundred and twenty thousand sheep." At the feast of the passover, Josiah the king of Judah, "gave to the people, of the flock, lambs and kids, all for the passover offerings, for all that were present, to the number of thirty thousand, and three thousand bullocks; these were of the king's sub-

^p Ps. cxliv, 13.

^r 2 Kings iii, 4.

^q Ps. lxxv, 13.

^s 1 Chron. v, 21.

stance.”^t The ewe brings forth her young commonly once a year,^u and in more ungenial climes, seldom more than one lamb at a time. But in the oriental regions, twin lambs are as frequent as they are rare in other places; which accounts in a satisfactory manner, for the prodigious numbers which the Syrian shepherd led to the mountains.

“Quam dives pecoris nivei, quam lactis abundans.”

Vir. Ecl. ii, l. 21.

“How rich in snowy flocks, how abounding in milk.”^v This uncommon fruitfulness, seems to be intimated by Solomon in his address to the spouse: “Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which come up from the washing; whereof every one bear twins, and none is barren among them.”^w

It ought not to be omitted, that the ewe has been known to bring forth twice in the year; and Homer affirms, that in Lybia she produces three times a-year.

τρεις γαρ τικτει μνηα τελεσφρον εις ενιαυτον.

Odyss. lib. iv.

But since the time of her gestation is five months, the assertion of that immortal bard cannot be true. Twin lambs appear to have been quite common in Italy, if credit may be given to Virgil.

“Bis gravidæ pecudes, bis pomis utilis arbor.” 2 *Geor.* l. 150.

The flocks which ranged the fertile pastures of Mesopotamia, seem also to have generally produced twins every year. Laban who lived in that country, is said to have changed the wages of Jacob ten times in the space of six

^t 2 Chron. xxxv, 7.

^u For this reason Callimachus prays to Apollo that by his favour the ewe which brought forth once a-year might suddenly bring forth her young twice.

Ἡ δίκῃ μνηοτοκος διδυματοκος αιψα γινεται.

Hymno in Apollinem.

^v Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. viii, cap. 72.

^w Song iv, 2.

years ; but since the wages of Jacob consisted of the lambs and the kids, they could not have been changed more than six times in six years, if his flock had brought forth only once a-year. Should it be thought that, according to this rule, the wages of Jacob must have been changed twelve times, let it be remembered, that the flocks of Laban had brought forth their first lambs before the bargain was concluded between him and Jacob, and by consequence, the latter had only the lambs of one yeanning that year ; and again, the flocks had yeanned only once in the last year of his abode with Laban, because he was compelled to leave the service of his envious relative, before the close of the season, and consequently, before the second yeanning. Thus the flocks yeanned only ten times from the date of their agreement, till the departure of Jacob to his own country. Or, we may consider the phrase “ ten times,” as a definite for an indefinite number ; in which sense it is often used by the sacred writers. Thus, Jehovah complains of his ancient people whom he had brought out of Egypt, that they had tempted him “ now these ten times,” that is, many times, “ and had not hearkened to his voice.”^x Job uses it in the same sense : “ These ten times have ye reproached me,” that is, ye have often reproached me.^y In the same manner, when Jacob complained that Laban had changed his wages ten times, he might only mean that he had done so frequently. Had we therefore no stronger proof, that the sheep of Laban yeanned twice in the year, the fact might seem to rest merely on the state of the flocks in the adjacent regions, which it cannot be doubted, generally yeanned twins, and for the most part twice in the

^x Numb. xiv, 22.^y Job xix, 3.

year. A stronger proof, therefore, may be drawn from these words: "And it came to pass, whensoever the stronger cattle did conceive, that Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the cattle in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods. But when the cattle were feeble, he put them not in; so the feebler were Laban's, and the stronger Jacob's."^z Two yeanings are supposed to be suggested in this passage, by the terms stronger and feebler; the lambs of the first were always stronger than those of the second: and consequently, they fell to Jacob by the special bounty of Heaven, causing the cattle, not by any law of nature, but by an act of Almighty power, to conceive among the rods, the use of which was merely the test of Jacob's faith in the divine promise. This is evident, by the sense in which the Syriac interpreter, and the Chaldee Paraphrast understood the text; for, instead of the term "feebler," they use the word "later," rendering the clause, so the later were Laban's. Jerome, Aquila, and other expositors, interpret the clause in the same manner. Kimchi, and other Jewish writers, often speak of the first and second yeanings; referring the former to the month Nisan, which corresponds to our March; and the latter to the month Tisri, which nearly corresponds to September; and they assert, that the lambs of the first yeaning are called קֶשְׁרִים, keshorim, or bound, because they had a more compact body; and those of the second, עֲטוּפִים, Aetophim, or deficient, because they were feebler. The autumnal lambs, however, were preferred by many before the vernal, and the winter before the summer lambs,^a as being more vigorous and healthy. But it must be confessed, that no certain trace of two yeanings

^z Gen. xxx, 41, 42.

^a Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. viii, cap. 47.

in the year can be discovered in the sacred volume. The fact is attested by many common authors, and seems necessary to account for the rapid increase of oriental stock, and the prodigious numbers of which the Syrian flocks consisted. The words of Moses may refer, at least with equal probability, to the vigorous and healthy constitution of the ewes which Jacob selected for his purpose; and signify, that robust mothers produced robust lambs, and feeble mothers a weak and spiritless offspring. Aware of the advantages of a vigorous and healthy stock, especially with a long and perilous journey before him, "Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the stronger ewes in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods; but when the cattle were feeble, he put them not in; so the feebler were Laban's, and the stronger Jacob's."

No animal is more gay and playful than the lamb. In a few days after its birth, which are spent in repose, it begins to discover the sportiveness of its disposition, in a variety of harmless and cheerful gambols. These have not escaped the notice even of inspired writers, but have furnished them with many beautiful and striking allusions. The trembling of the earth, and the reeling of the mountains, at the presence of Jehovah their creator, have been compared to the frisking of a lamb, in that sublime ode in which the royal Psalmist describes the majesty of God, and the corresponding fear of his people: "What ailed you, ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams; and ye little hills like lambs?" The holy Psalmist expressed in the presence of all Israel, the joy and exultation of his heart, when he brought home the ark, dancing before the Lord with all his might; or as the words may be rendered, leaping as a lamb.^b

^b Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, cap. 46, p. 515.

The sheep naturally delights in a mountainous country. Theocritus observes, the sheep feed on the mountains :

σαν δὲ καλὰν Κυβερειαν ἐν οὐρεσὶ μαλα νομευσι. *Idyll. iii, l. 46, 47.*

And in Virgil, the shepherd sings :

“ Mille meæ Siculis errant in montibus agnæ.” *Ec. ii, l. 21.*

“ A thousand ewes of mine wander on the Sicilian mountains.”

To this characteristic inclination of the flock, the sacred writers have more than once alluded. Thus, when Moses tended the flocks of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, he “ led them to the back side of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb.”^c The prophet, in a later age, compares the return of Israel from the land of their captivity, under the mighty protection of Jehovah, to the return of a flock, after long absence, to their native mountains : “ As a shepherd seeketh out his flock, in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered ; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered, in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel, by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country.”^d

On any alarm, they forsake their pastures, and run together into one close compacted group :

Ἄς μιν τ' ἀσχηθῆναι ἐπ' ἀλλήλησι κεχυνταί. *Iliad, lib. v, l. 141.*

To this circumstance, the prophet undoubtedly refers, when in the name of Jehovah, he warned his people of the time, when, terrified by the invasion of hostile armies, and the cruel devastation of their country, they should seek for safety in their cities, as the flocks of Bozrah in their

^c Exod. iii, 1.

^d Ezek. xxxiv, 12.

fold, from the attack of the wolf or the lion; “I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee; I will surely gather the remnant of Israel: I will put them together as the sheep of Bozrah, as the flock in the midst of their fold: they shall make great noise, because of the multitude of men.”^e

This useful and harmless animal is neither distinguished for its sagacity, its strength, nor its swiftness; it is, therefore, exposed to the attacks of many enemies; and when deserted by the keeper, no domestic animal is more helpless and wretched. To the misery of this destitute condition, the sacred writers frequently allude; and among the Hebrews, it seems to have become a proverb. The passages in which the allusion occurs, are too numerous to be quoted; the following instances may suffice: “And he said, I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills as sheep that have not a shepherd.”^f “Therefore, they went their way as a flock: they were troubled because there was no shepherd.”^g “Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.”^h “But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.”ⁱ

The sheep is a creature prone to wander from its accustomed pastures; to separate itself, although a gregarious animal, from the flock, and ramble into distant and dangerous solitudes. The perils to which this erratic disposition exposes it, are greatly increased by the want of inclination or skill to return. To these defects, the Psalmist pointedly refers, in that well known confession; “I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant.”^j

^e Mic. ii, 12.

^g Zech. x, 2.

ⁱ Mat. ix, 36.

^f 1 Kings xxii, 17.

^h Zech. xiii, 7.

^j Ps. cxix, 176.

The prophet extends it to all mankind: "All we like sheep have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."^k This is confirmed by the apostle: "For ye were as sheep going astray: but are now returned unto the shepherd and bishop of your souls."^l Such is the true character of all mankind; prone to wander from God, their only proper rest, disinclined to return, without knowledge to discern, or wisdom to secure the true interests of their immortal souls, till in the day of power the mind is illumined from above.

This placid and gentle animal, on account of the mildness of its dispositions, has been chosen as the symbol of the Redeemer.^m "And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain." In other parts of Scripture, he does not refuse to be compared with a lamb and a sheep: "Behold," cried the Baptist, "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."ⁿ The apostle Peter leads us directly to the efficacy of his blood for the remission of sins: "For as much as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold—but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."^o Such figures were familiar to the ancient prophets: "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."^p As a lamb so tame and gentle, that he licks the garments of his destroyer.

^k Isa. liii, 6.

^m Rev. v, 6.

^o 1 Pet. i, 19.

^l 1 Pet. ii, 23.

ⁿ John i, 29.

^p Isa. liii, 7.

The Goat.

Two kinds of goats wander in the pastures of Syria and Canaan : one that differs little from the common sort in Britain ; the other remarkable for the largeness of its ears. The size of this variety is somewhat larger than ours ; but their ears are often a foot long, and broad in proportion. The Syrians keep them chiefly for their milk, of which they yield a considerable quantity.^a The present race of goats in the vicinity of Jerusalem, are of this broad-eared species. To this kind of goat, so different from the common breed, it is probable the prophet refers : “ As the shepherd taketh out of the mouth of the lion, two legs or a piece of an ear, so shall the children of Israel be taken out, that dwell in Samaria and in Damascus.”^r It is indeed the intention of the prophet, to express how few of his people escaped from the overthrow of their country, and were settled in foreign parts ; but it would have been hardly natural to suppose, that a shepherd would exert himself to make a lion quit a piece of an ear, only of a common goat ; it must therefore be supposed to refer to the long-eared kind. Rauwolff observed goats on the mountains around Jerusalem, with pendant ears almost two feet long.^s

When they are suffered to rove at large, and to browse on the herbs and leaves which are agreeable to their taste, their milk is sweet and well tasted ; while the milk of cows, from their being fed with the refuse of the gardens, is at Aleppo and other great cities, very unpalatable. This circumstance discovers a force and beauty in the promise of Solomon, to the diligent husbandman, which have been ge-

^a Russel's Hist. of Aleppo, vol. ii, p. 150.

^r Amos iii, 12.

^s Page 234.

nerally overlooked: "Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds, and thou shalt have goats' milk enough for the food of thy household, and for the maintenance of thy maidens."^t

"The high hills," said David, "are a refuge for the wild goats."^u The disposition of this fearless and sure-footed creature, to scale the steepest cliffs, to traverse the shelvings of the most frightful precipices, which the foot of man or other animal has never trodden, to occupy the loftiest and most inaccessible crags, to dance on their smallest projections, where it has scarcely room to set down its foot, is well known to every observer of Nature, and furnishes the inspired writer with that beautiful allusion: "Then Saul went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats."^v No toils, no perils could restrain the pursuit of that jealous and cruel monarch; or shake his resolution to shed the blood of his unoffending relation.

Sheep and goats frequently mingle in the same pastures; and on these occasions, the he-goats always take the lead. To this habit, the prophet alludes in his exhortation to Israel: "Remove out of the midst of Babylon, and go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans, and be as the he-goats before the flocks."^w

A flock of goats is fewer in number than a flock of sheep, because the former are given to wander and separate, while the latter, more gregarious in their temper, collect into one place.^x This is the reason, says Bochart, that the sacred writer compares the small army of the Israelites to a flock of goats rather than to a flock of sheep. While seven is

^t Prov. xxvii, 23, 27.

^u Psa. civ, 18.

^v 1 Sam. xxiv, 2.

^w Jer. i, 8. Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, cap. 51, p. 620.

^x Varro de Re Rust. lib. ii, cap. 3. Columella, lib. viii, cap. 6.

always used by the Hebrews to denote a sufficient or complete number, two is constantly employed to signify a few, or very few. Thus, the widow woman said to the prophet; "As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruise: And behold I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it and die." The phrase is used in the same sense by the prophet concerning the reduced state of his people; "Yet glean- ing grapes shall be left in it, as the shaking of an olive tree, two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough." Another prophet uses it in relation to the return of a small number of the captives to their own land; "I will take you; one of a city and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion." And Hosea encourages his people to re- pentance with the promise, "After two days will he re- vive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight," or, within a very short time he will de- liver them from their enemies. The sacred historian ac- cordingly compares the armies of Israel opposed to the Syrians to "two little flocks of kids;" two, because they were few in number; little flocks, as goats from their roaming disposition always are; flocks of kids, feeble and timid; without resources and without hope. A more com- plete and glowing picture of national weakness, even the pen of inspiration never drew.

The hair of the goat is plucked off, or shorn like the wool of sheep, and manufactured into stuffs of different kinds in the oriental regions.^y The tabernacle of Moses was covered with curtains of goats' hair, spun by the

^y Varro de Re Rust. lib. ii, and Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. xvi, cap. 30. Virgil, Geor. lib. iii, l. 311.

women of Israel in the wilderness.² In the Song of Solomon, the hair of the spouse is compared to a flock of goats from mount Gilead ;^p that is, the hair of a flock of goats, which, in some species, grows very long :

“ Nec minus interia barbas, incanaque menta
Cinyphii tondent hirci, setasque comantes,
Usum in castrorum et miseris velamine nautis.”

Geor. lib. iii, l. 311.

The celebrated author of *Theron and Aspasio*, gives the allusion a different turn. The amiableness of the church in the exemplary conversation of true believers, is displayed by a copious growth of hair, which flows down from the parted forelock in decent curls. Thy hair is as a flock of goats, that are seen afar off, and appear in a pendant attitude, from the summit of mount Gilead; most agreeably adorning the place, and detaining the spectator's eye. This exposition takes in a circumstance which corresponds with the pensile position of the hair; renders the comparison more full and exact; and is, according to the observation of a most accurate judge, one of the chief remarkables in such a prospect :

“ Non ego vos posthac, viride projectus in antro,
Dumosa pendere procul de rupe videbo.” *Vir. Ecl. i, l. 77.*

Goats' hair is of two sorts; the one long and coarse, is used in the manufacture of tent curtains, sails, and other fabrics of the same kind: the other is much finer; it grows under the coarse hair, and has received the distinguishing name of goats' wool.

“ Alter rixatur de lana sæpe caprina.” *Hor. lib. i, Epist. 18.*

It is fabricated into stuffs, which, according to the ancients, almost equal silk in fineness. Hence, it is easy to

² *Exod. xxvi, 7, and xxxv, 26.*

^a *Song iv, 1.*

perceive the reason that Michal, the daughter of Saul, placed a pillow of goats' hair for a bolster to the image in the bed of David, that it might in some degree represent his hair; for it has been asserted, that human hair in the regions of the east, very much resembles the hair of goats: hence, those who were bald, sometimes endeavoured to conceal the defect, by covering their heads with the skin of a kid. In this manner, Rebekah disguised the neck and hands of Jacob, that his father might take him for Esau, who was by the testimony of the inspired writer, "a hairy man."

Goats' milk has been long in use for medicinal purposes among almost every nation, and in many places it is the common food of the inhabitants. This may be inferred from these words of Solomon: "And thou shalt have goats' milk enough for thy food, for the food of thy household, and for the maintenance of thy maidens."^b The ox, says Jerome, was made for ploughing, the horse for riding, the dog for watching, the she-goat for milk, and the sheep for wool. Galen mentions the milk of that animal as the common food of the peasant;^c and Varro makes the same remark.^d

The sacred writers frequently allude to the kid; and the term which they employ uniformly signifies a young goat. Some writers contend that גדי denotes also a lamb; but no instance of this meaning occurs in the Scriptures, nor according to Bochart, in any Syrian or Arabian author; the opinion of Kimchi, and other Rabbinnical writers, therefore, is unsupported by any proof, and consequently is entitled to no regard.

In the Holy Scriptures, the term (גדי) Gedi is very

^b Prov. xxvii, 27.

^c Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, cap. 51, p. 629.

^d De Re Rust. lib. ii, cap. 11.

often connected with (העזים,) Haizim ; and the phrase is rendered, in our translation, kid of the goats. Thus Rebekah commanded her son Jacob, “ Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two kids of the goats ;^e and I will make them savoury meat for thy father, such as he loveth.” This phrase is not used with the view of distinguishing a young goat from a lamb ; for it has been just observed, that the original term is never employed to denote a lamb, but to signify a very young kid that still requires the dug and the watchful care of its mother. Bochart is not entirely satisfied with this reason, because, in several parts of Scripture, he found the phrases שעיר עזים, Sheir Izim, and צפיר עזים, Tsephir Izim, a male of the goats, which cannot be understood of a kid, because, in Daniel, it is described as full grown, armed with horns, engaging in combat with the ram, casting him down to the ground, and stamping upon him with his feet : which by no means agrees with the tender age of a kid.^f But the original phrases are not the same ; the term which, in the book of Daniel, is rendered he-goat, signifies, in general, a rough shaggy animal, and is, therefore, placed in that construction, to determine what particular creature is intended. By a kid of the goats, then, is meant one of a tender age, or that is still suckled by the dam.

The village of Engedi, situated in the neighbourhood of Jericho, derives its name from the Hebrew word (עין) Ain, a fountain, and (גדי) a kid. It is suggested by the situation among lofty rocks, which, overhanging the valleys, seem to threaten the traveller with immediate destruction. A fountain of pure water rises near the summit, which the inhabitants call Engedi, the fountain of the goat, because it is hardly accessible to any other creature.

^e Gen. xxvii, 9.

^f Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, cap. 51, p. 631.

Among the Hebrews, the kid was reckoned a great delicacy. Hence, when Isaac sent his son Esau to procure him savoury meat, such as he loved, Rebekah prepared for him two kids of the goats, dressed, no doubt, in various ways, and with different sauces, that the aged patriarch might choose what was most agreeable to his taste. In the same manner, Gideon, the chief magistrate of Israel, and Manoah, the father of Samson, entertained the angel of the Lord, who appeared to them in human form, and was regarded by them as a person of their own order. The patriarch Judah sent a kid to Thamar, his daughter-in-law; and Jesse, the father of David, reckoned it a present not unworthy of a king; for he “took an ass laden with bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent them by David his son unto Saul.”^g The superiour delicacy of this food is also celebrated by many heathen authors. It is thus described by Juvenal:

“De Tiburtino veniet pinguissimus agro
Hoedulus, et toto grege mollior, inscius herbæ
Nec diem ausus virgas humilis mordere salicti,
Qui plus lactis habet, quam sanguinis.”

Sat. xi.

These instances shew in what light we are to consider the complaint made by the elder brother of the prodigal son in the parable, that his father had never given him a kid to entertain his friends; although he had not suffered him to want the usual comforts of life, he had never enabled him to treat them with so great a delicacy.

The Jewish legislator three times forbids his people to “seethe a kid in his mother’s milk.” The meaning of this law has been greatly disputed, although the terms in which it is couched, are sufficiently clear and precise. It is the opinion of some writers, that the prohibition refers to a kid

^g 1 Sam. xvi, 20.

in the womb of its mother, which in that state is nourished only with milk ; but the opinion of Clemens, that the people of Israel had been in the practice of eating the foetus of a goat, which this precept was intended to prohibit, is supported by no proof. The disgusting custom of eating the foetus of a sow, is indeed mentioned by Plutarch ;^h but we have no proof that it was known to epicures in the times of Moses. Other expositors imagine, that the Jews were by this precept forbidden to take away the life of a kid, before it was eight days old, when, according to them, it may subsist without the aid of its mother's milk. This exposition is supposed to be confirmed by another precept : “ When a bullock, or a sheep, or a goat is brought forth, then it shall be seven days under the dam ; and from the eighth day, and thenceforth, it shall be accepted for an offering made by fire unto the Lord.ⁱ But since the law, which prohibited the people of Israel to offer in sacrifice, “ the young of the herd, or of the flock,” before the eighth day, is immediately subjoined to the precept concerning the oblation of the first ripe fruits, and the first born, in the twenty-second chapter of Exodus ; so, in the twenty-third and thirty-fourth chapters, the law which forbids to seethe a kid in his mother's milk, follows the same precept ; and by consequence, not only the sacred, but also the common use of the kid, is prohibited before the eighth day. Such is the opinion, and the reasoning by which it is supported ; but it must be evident to every reader, that a kid is as much in his mother's milk all the time he is suckled, as during the first eight days ; nor can any reason be imagined, why he may not be said to be in his mother's milk on the seventh day from his birth, rather than on the eighth or the ninth.

^h Περὶ σαρκοφαγίας, lib. ii, quoted by Bochart, Hieroz. vol. ii, cap. 52, p. 635.

ⁱ Lev. xxii, 27.

Others are of opinion, that, according to this precept, a sucking kid was at no time to be slain, either for sacred or common use. The she-goat suckles her young about three months; and till this period, it was not to be subjected to the sacrificing knife. But it is very improbable, that the Jews were forbidden the use of a kid for so long a time; for that which the law permits to be offered in sacrifice to God, may surely be eaten by his people. Nor was any species of food prohibited by the law, but for ceremonial impurity. But that cannot be reckoned legally unclean, which the law permits to be offered in sacrifice at the altar. He permitted a sucking kid or lamb, to be offered on the eighth day; a sure proof they were not reckoned unclean, while they remained under the dam. The prophet Samuel offered a sucking lamb as a burnt-offering to the Lord on a day of public humiliation; and God condescended to give them a strong proof of his acceptance, in utterly discomfiting their enemies, by a furious tempest of thunder and lightning.^j If, therefore, a sucking kid might be offered in sacrifice to God, it might be used as food by his people.

Nor is their opinion more tenable, who say, that by this law the dam and her suckling were not to be slain at the same time. To cherish kind and humane feelings among the chosen seed, Jehovah forbade them to kill a cow, a sheep, or a goat, on the same day with their young; but the precept under consideration cannot naturally bear such a meaning. Had this been the design of Moses, why did he not say in plain terms, Thou shalt not seethe a kid and his mother at the same time? He must, therefore, have meant what the words naturally suggest, that a kid is not to be seethed in the milk of his mother. The barbarous

^j 1 Sam. vii, 9.

custom to which the lawgiver alludes, probably existed in some neighbouring countries, and particularly in Egypt, from whose iron yoke they had just been delivered ; either because the flesh dressed in this manner was more tender and juicy, than when roasted with fire, or boiled in water ; or, which is more probable, while at the feast of ingathering, they gave thanks to God for the mercies they had received, and expressed their dependance upon him for future blessings, they were not to expect his favour by imitating the superstitious rites of the heathens, among whom they had lived so long, who at the end of their harvest seethed a kid in his mother's milk, and sprinkled the broth in a magical way upon their gardens and fields, to render them more fruitful next season.

The goat was one of those clean beasts, which, under the law, prefigured the Saviour of sinners. The Paschal lamb was a type of Christ dying for the sins of his people ; but the goat had the honour of prefiguring both his death and resurrection. On the day of expiation, the high priest received from the congregation two he-goats, and presented them before the Lord, at the door of the tabernacle. He then cast lots upon the two goats : "one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scape-goat ;" or, to determine which of them should be offered in sacrifice, and which conducted into the wilderness. The Greek interpreters call the scape-goat a defender from evils, the name which the heathens gave to their tutelar gods ; because he bore away into the desert the sins of the congregation, which in solemn confession had been laid upon him, and all the evils which followed in their train. As the same animal could not prefigure both the death and resurrection of the Redeemer, two were selected on this occasion ; of which the one was by lot offered

in sacrifice, as a type of the death of Christ, while the other was preserved alive, and let loose in the wilderness, to denote his future resurrection.

The Dog.

The watchful guardian of the flock, is next entitled to our consideration. Independent of his beautiful figure, his strength, his vivacity, his agility, he possesses every internal excellence, which in a lower animal can attract the favourable regard of man. A passionate, and even a ferocious and sanguinary temper, renders the wild dog formidable to all animals; but in the domestic state, it gradually disappears, and is succeeded by the amiable sentiments of attachment, and the desire of pleasing. The eminent qualities of this animal have been the admiration of all ages.^k So tractable is his disposition, and so diversified his talents, that the art of training the dog seems to have been among the first invented by man; and, says Buffon, the result of this art was the conquest and peaceable possession of the earth. Without his assistance, how could man have conquered, tamed, and reduced the other animals into bondage? How could he still discover, hunt down, and destroy noxious and savage beasts? The dog, therefore, is necessary to the safety of man, and to his dominion over the lower animals. So convinced were the first generations of men of the necessity and importance of his services, that they sometimes gave his name to their children. Among the Arabians, a man is occasionally called Celb, and a woman Celba; both of which are derived from the Hebrew root (כלב) Celeb, a dog. A prince

^k Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. iv, p. 2. Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, p. 77. Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. viii, cap. 61. Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. iv, cap. 40, and lib. vi, cap. 10, 25, and 62; lib. xii, cap. 35; lib. vii, cap. 10; lib. viii, cap. 2.

of Judah bore the name of Caleb, or the dog ; and from the same root, the royal Psalmist gave one of his sons the name of Cileab. These may be considered as sure proofs, how greatly the dog was valued among the shepherd kings and people of the east. The patriarch Job refers so familiarly to the dogs of his flock, that we must conclude that animal had been long in the service of the shepherd, before the times in which he flourished. Faithful and affectionate, he watches over the property of his master ; and his voice is better heard, and often more regarded in the flock, than that of his owner. The flocks and herds committed to his care, he conducts and protects with singular attention and prudence, and seldom employs force against them, but for the preservation of peace and good order. But this character belongs to him only in a domestic state, and under strict and proper discipline ; for in a wild state, and in desert or depopulated countries, he differs not in his manners from the wolf, excepting by the facility with which he may be tamed.

No animal is more “ susceptible of impressions, more easily modified by moral causes, and more subject to alterations occasioned by physical influence.” In very warm climates, he is liable to degenerate ; in a few years he loses his voice, barks no more, but makes a dismal kind of howling noise, and in some countries, becomes perfectly mute ; he loses also the elegance of his form, and sinks into an ugly animal with a sharp muzzle, long erect ears, and a long pointed tail. This deformed and mute creature, is of no use to man : destitute of voice, of instinct, and activity, he is no longer qualified to take charge of his flocks, to guard his dwelling, or aid him in the destruction of noxious animals. To these important facts, the prophet Isaiah alludes in terms which cannot be mistaken : “ His watch-

men are blind ; they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark ; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs, which can never have enough.”¹ The prophets and the priests of Israel had become so degenerate, that they could no longer discharge their duty ; they were not merely unwilling, they were become incapable of acting a part becoming their station. The incapacity of a degenerate dog is physical ; theirs was moral, but in consequence of prevailing corruption, not less incurable than the other. At once slothful and rapacious, servile and overbearing, they provoked the wrath of Jehovah, and excited the scorn or detestation of his people.

In a wild state, dogs unite in troops to hunt the prey, and often direct their combined attack against the fiercest and most powerful beasts of the forest. When pursued by men, they are known to turn upon them with furious rage, and hunt them in their turn.^m Their passions, even after they have submitted to the dominion of man, are easily inflamed ; and when one opens, the whole pack instantly join in the cry, and begin the pursuit. In this manner acted the Jews, who combined against the life of their Saviour. The fickle and sanguinary multitude that shouted a few days before, “ Hosannah to the Son of God,” joined with equal promptitude and eagerness in the cry of their leaders, before the tribunal of Pilate, “ Crucify him, crucify him.” To this circumstance, David in spirit, alludes in the twenty-second psalm, where he describes the sufferings of his Son and Lord : “ Dogs have compassed me, the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me ; they pierced my hands and my feet.”ⁿ

¹ Isa. lvi, 10.

ⁿ Psa. xxii, 16.

^m Sparman's Voyage, vol. i, chap. 4, sec. 4.

The dog is naturally a beast of prey, and the food which he prefers, is the flesh of animals. Hence, the law of Moses commanded : “ Neither shall ye eat any flesh that is torn of beasts ; ye shall cast it to the dogs.”^o The sanguinary temper of this animal, is established by many incontrovertible proofs ; he licks the blood and devours the carcasses of the slain. The dogs licked the innocent blood of Naboth ; and still following their natural instincts, according to the prediction of Elijah, they licked the blood of a royal murderer, and eat the flesh of his partner in guilt.^p So fierce is their nature, so cruel their devastations, that in the wrath of Heaven, they are joined with the sword, the ravenous bird, and the savage beast, in executing the sentence of Divine justice upon guilty and unrepenting nations : “ And I will appoint over them four kinds, saith the Lord ; the sword to slay, and the dogs to tear, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the earth, to devour and to destroy.”^q The complete deliverance of God’s ancient people from the power of their enemies, was in ancient prophecy marked by the same phenomenon : “ The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring my people again from the depths of the sea ; that thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the same.”^r

But this voracious animal easily accommodates himself to other kinds of food ; the sacred writer accordingly observes, that “ the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master’s table.”^s In a simple and unrefined state of society, they are not excluded from the apartment and the table of their master, but share in his comforts, as in his toils and privations. Persons of the highest rank among

^o Exod. xxii, 31.

^p 1 Kings xxii, 19.

^q Jer. xv, 3.

^r Psa. lxxviii, 22, 23.

^s Mat. xv, 27.

the primitive Greeks, allowed their faithful dogs to wait around their festive boards, and gather up the fragments of their meals. Not fewer than nine of these animals attended at the table of Patroclus.

Εννεα τῷ γε ἀνακτὶ τραπεζῆς κύνες ἦσαν. *Il. lib. xxiii, l. 173.*

In the seventeenth book of the *Odyssey*, he celebrates the attention of Ulysses to his dog Argus, and puts the following words into the mouth of his hero, when, on his return to Ithaca, he found him lying neglected before the doors of his palace :

οἷοι τε τραπεζῆς κύνες ἀνδρῶν
Γίγνοντ', ἀγλαίης δὲ ἐνέκεν κομέεσσιν ἀνακτεῖς. *Odys. lib. xvii, l. 308.*

Such are the dogs which are fed at the table of heroes, which kings rear for their own pleasure. The princes of those days, were not ashamed to carry home to their dogs, the crumbs which fell from the table of their entertainer, or the fragments which remained after the feast. This ancient custom, so contrary to all our ideas of propriety, is mentioned by Homer in these lines :

Ὡς δὲ ὅταν ἀμφὶ ἀνακτα κύνες δαιτηθῇεν ἰόντα
Σαίνωσ' αἰεὶ γὰρ τε φέρι μείλιγματα θυμῶ. *Odys. lib. x, l. 216.*

The dogs watched their master when he returned from a feast, and fawned around him ; for he always brought them some fragments grateful to their taste. So poor and miserable was the afflicted Lazarus at the rich man's gate, that, like the dogs which came and licked his sores, as they waited the return of their master from the feast, he desired to eat of the crumbs which had been reserved for them, and to receive his share with them at the gate, from the hand of their owner, as he passed into his house.

The ancients, like some modern nations, unacquainted with the useful contrivances of these times, conveyed their

food into the mouth with their hands ; and when they had finished their meal, cleansed their fingers with the soft and fine part of the bread, which they called *απομαγδαλαιαι* ; this they afterwards threw to the dogs. To these, the woman of Canaan probably refers : “ The dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master’s table.”^t

Their voracious appetite reconciles them to the most impure species of food ; in allusion to which, the wise man observes, “ As a dog returns to his vomit, so a fool returns to his folly.”^u Even the matter of a running sore, is not disagreeable to their taste ; for in the parable, the dogs came of their own accord, and licked the sores of the poor beggar. When they have received a wound, they lick the sore with their own tongue, and restore the injured part to its former soundness :

Τρωθεντες δε εχασι την γλωτταν φαρμακον. *Ælian.*^v

He has, observes an ancient writer, quoted by Bochart, the native aid of a powerful saliva :

“ *Ipsæ habet auxilium validæ natale salivæ.*” *Gratius.*^w

When he drinks, he does not take in the water with a full draught, after the manner of some other animals, but by lapping, which the Arabians call drinking with the tongue. The orientals often imitated the dog in his manner of drinking ; and among the ancient people of God, the practice seems to have been very common. By this custom, Jehovah tried the forces of Gideon : “ And the Lord said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself ; likewise every one that boweth down up-

^t Mat. xv, 27. Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, cap. 55, p. 669.

^u Prov. xxvi, 11.

^v De Nat. Animal. lib. viii, cap. 9.

^w Hieroz. lib. ii, p. 672.

on his knees to drink.”^x The people who lapped as a dog, standing on their feet, and taking up the water from the river with their hand, evinced an alacrity and fortitude, which eminently fitted them for the approaching contest; while those who bowed down upon their knees, and inclined their whole body to drink, betrayed a lazy and slothful disposition, unbecoming the character of a warrior, and ill adapted to the nature of the service for which they were levied.

Many cities in Syria, and other parts of the east, are crowded with dogs, which belong to no particular person, and by consequence, have none to feed them, but get their food in the streets, and about the markets.^y Dogs also abound in all the Indian towns and villages, and are numerous, noisy, and troublesome, especially to travellers. Like those in Syria, they have no respective owner, generally subsist upon charity, and are never destroyed. They frequently hunt in large packs, like the jackalls, which they resemble in many other respects.^z These allusions are clearly involved in the prayer of the royal Psalmist for deliverance from his enemies: “And at evening let them return; and let them make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city. Let them wander up and down for meat, and grudge if they be not satisfied.”^a

The vicious dispositions and habits of this animal, are not less numerous and important, than the valuable qualities for which he has been so greatly celebrated. His insatiable voracity has been proverbial in all ages; so gross are his inclinations, that they will not bear to be described, but we may form some idea of them from his greedily de-

^x Judges vii, 5.

^y Russel's Hist. of Aleppo, vol. ii, p. 179.

^z Forbes's Orient. Mem. vol. iii, p. 67.

^a Psa. lix, 14, 15.

vouring his own vomit. So wrathful, and even truculent, is his disposition, that he often seizes upon a stranger without any provocation; so frequent and dangerous are his attacks, that the traveller is reduced to the necessity of arming himself with a staff in defence of his person. To this well known circumstance, Goliath indignantly refers in his invective to David: "Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves?" But if the dog is prompted by an irresistible propensity to attack the passing stranger, his forbearance toward the many thousands of Israel, when they took their departure from the land of Egypt, must be ascribed to the miraculous interposition of Divine providence, for on that memorable occasion, not a dog moved his tongue against any of that people.

His irritable disposition is the foundation of that beautiful proverb: "He that passeth by and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears,"^b He wantonly exposes himself to immediate danger, which he can neither resist nor avoid. No animal, says the celebrated Scaliger, is more uncivil than the dog; for in the largest buildings, two of them can scarcely live peaceably together. Envious and inhospitable, he refuses to associate with those of his own species, or joins himself only to a few chosen companions. So great is his selfishness, that he desires to possess every thing himself, and never submits to share his booty with others but by force.

The shameless impudence of the dog in season, and when pinched with hunger, has been observed in every age, and among every people. A dog, and a person of unblushing impudence, were among the Greeks conver-

^b Prov. xxvi, 17.

tible terms. In support of this assertion, many proofs might be produced from their best writers; but the following passage from Homer, in which Achilles charges Agamemnon with having the impudence of a dog, joined to the timidity of a deer, must suffice:

Οἰνοβαρές, κύνος ὀμμάτων, καρδίην τ' ἐλαφίοιο. *Il. lib. i, l. 225.*^c

These, it is probable, are the traits in the character of the dog, which, added to his fawning servility, have from time immemorial, drawn down upon him the unqualified contempt of mankind. The patriarch Job, clearly intimates the state of public feeling, in reference to this valuable animal, when he indignantly tells his persecutors: “But now they that are younger than I, have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock.”^d From these words, it clearly appears that in the remotest ages their services were necessary to guard the flocks from the attacks of wild beasts. In the lines of Homer the dog is always associated with the shepherd, in watching the fold.^e But his vigilance and courage and attachment could not save him from the contempt of his master, so unequivocally expressed by the patient sufferer. The contempt in which the dog was held in the times of David, is strongly expressed by Abner, in his reply to Ishbosheth: “Am I a dog’s head,” or as it is rendered in the Syriac, the head of the dogs, --- “that thou chargest me to-day with a fault concerning this woman?” Although I am commander in chief of the armies of Israel, yet hast thou despised me as if I were only the conductor of dogs. Had not the dog been reckoned a very vile and contemptible animal, Abner could not have expressed himself in such terms. So vile in So-

^c See also *Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. vii, cap. 19.* ^d Job xxx, 1.

^e *Iliad, lib. x, l. 183; lib. xii, l. 302; and lib. xvii, l. 109.*

lomon's estimation was a living dog, that he places him in opposition to a dead lion.^f The son of Jesse, to express the low opinion he had of himself, and by consequence, the unreasonableness of his sovereign's conduct, addresses him in these words : " After whom is the king of Israel come out ? after whom dost thou pursue ? after a dead dog, after a flea."^g Mephibosheth, as a proof of his deep humility, thus addresses David : " What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am ?"^h When the prophet predicted to Hazael, the future king of Syria, the horrid cruelties which the people of Israel were to suffer from his hand, the astonished Syrian exclaimed : " But, what is thy servant a dog (the vilest of all animals), that he should do this great thing ?" We know from the words which Homer puts into the mouth of Helen, that the same figure was common among the early Greeks :

Δαίερ, ἐπεισε μάλιστα πόνος φρενας ἀμφιέεικεν

Εἵνεκ' ἐμεῖο κύνος. —

Il. lib. vi, l. 356.

" O my brother, since extreme distress has invaded thy bosom on my account, who am but a dog."

The application of this term to Shimei, was the strongest mark of contempt which Abishai could imagine : " Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king ?"ⁱ The father of Grecian poetry, puts it frequently in the mouth of his heroes, when with bitter invectives they provoked their enemies to battle, or triumphed over the fallen antagonist : Pisander calls the Trojans faithless truce breakers, and worthless dogs.

Ἦν ἐμε λωθήσασθε, καὶ καὶ κύνες

Il. lib. xiii, l. 623.

And Diomed addresses the illustrious Hector in these

^f Eccl. ix, 4.

^h 2 Sam. ix, 8.

^g 1 Sam. xxiv, 14.

ⁱ 2 Sam. xvi, 9.

contemptuous terms : Dog that thou art, once more hast thou escaped destruction :

Εξ ου νυν εφυγες θανατον, νουν.

The sacred writer applies the reproachful epithet, 1. To the heathen who were aliens to the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise : “ It is not meet to take the children’s bread and to cast it to dogs.”^j 2. To the profane despisers of the divine word, who cruelly persecute the ministers of religion : “ Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.”^k 3. To the enemies of religion in general ; thus the Saviour complains : “ Dogs have compassed me ; the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me --- Deliver my soul from the sword : my darling from the power of the dog.”^l 4. To the impure, that are polluted with various crimes : “ For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.”^m 5. To those who, from worldly motives, entered into the Christian ministry, concerning whom the apostle warns the church at Philippi : “ Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers ;”ⁿ and whose character the prophet Isaiah has drawn in such vivid colours.^o

The poets of Greece and Rome stigmatised the dog as obscene and impure, and joined him with the sow that loves to wallow in the mire.^p The sacred writers speak of him in similar terms : He that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog’s neck ; he that offereth an oblation, as

^j Mat. xiv, 26.

^l Psal. xxii, 16, 20.

ⁿ Phil. iii, 2.

^k Mat. vii, 6.

^m Rev. xxii, 15.

^o Isa. lvi, 10, 11.

^p Geor. lib. i, l. 470. Horatius. lib. i, Epist. ad Lollium, and lib. ii, Epist. ad Julium Florum.

if he offered swine's flesh.^a Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine.^r The dog is returned to his vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.^s

The law of Moses placed the dog in the class of unclean animals, and stamped upon him a peculiar mark of infamy, prohibiting an Israelite to bring the price of a dog, either in money or in goods, as an oblation to the Lord, and connecting it with the wages of prostitution: "Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore, or the price of a dog, into the house of the Lord thy God for any vow; for even both these are an abomination unto the Lord thy God." This special prohibition was evidently pointed against the idolatrous worship which the superstitious inhabitants of Egypt, from whence the chosen people had lately escaped, addressed to that animal. We learn this fact from Juvenal, who complains in his fifteenth satire;

"Oppida tota canem venerantur, nemo Dianam."

The testimony of the Latin poet is confirmed by Diodorus, who, in his first book, assures us, that the Egyptians highly venerate some animals both during their life and after their death; and expressly mentions the dog as one object of this absurd adoration.^t To these unexceptionable witnesses may be added Herodotus, who says when a dog expires, all the members of the family to which he belonged, worship the carcass; and that in every part of the kingdom, the carcasses of their dogs are embalmed, and deposited in consecrated ground.^u Anubis, who held a principal rank among the deities of Egypt, had

^a Is. lxvi, 1. ^r Mat. vii, 6. ^s 2 Pet. ii, 22. ^t Hist. 11, d.

^u Lib. ii, cap. 66 and 67. See also Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. x, c. 45. Bryant's Anal. vol. i, p. 330.—Even the Athenians sacrificed to a dog. Ibid. lib. vii, cap. 28.

the head of a dog, and for this reason sustained, in the writings of Roman poets, the title of Anubis the barker.

“Omnigenumque Deum monstra et latrator Anubis.”

Vir. Æn viii, l. 698.

In other countries, the dog is not worshipped, but offered in sacrifice to their false gods. The Carians immolated a dog to Mars; and the Lacedemonians followed their example. The Bœotians ratified their covenants by cutting a dog in two, and passing between the pieces; the Macedonians, as we learn from the authentic page of Livy, observed the same custom; and the Samothracians, in a deep cavern, sacrificed dogs in honour of Hecate.^v To preserve the holy people from these abominations, to which, from the native darkness of the human mind, and their long residence in Egypt, they were unhappily prone, the divine lawgiver expressly forbade them to bring the price of a dog, which, in his eyes, was equally hateful as the hire of a whore, into the house of the Lord.

The Hog.

The sacred writers very seldom allude to this animal; because it was excluded from the land of Promise, during the whole time of the theocratical government. It seems indeed, on account of its gross habits, to have been held in great abhorrence by the patriarchs themselves, long before the ceremonial code pronounced it unclean; for we cannot discover, that it constituted any part of their wealth. The sons of Abraham by Keturah, appear to have regarded it with equal aversion as the descendants of Issac; for we do not read, that Job, who was most probably one of their posterity, possessed so much as one of these animals. The inspired writer of 1st Chronicles, mentions the

^v Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, p. 678.

names of several officers, whom David appointed to superintend the herds, the camels, the asses, and the flocks; but mentions no person to superintend the swine. In the wars which the people of Israel were compelled to wage with the neighbouring states, they frequently obtained an immense booty in flocks and herds, in camels and asses; but we cannot find that they met with one sow in their numerous expeditions. Porphyry, in his Book *De Abstinencia*, expressly denies that any swine were reared in Judea. This fact seems to be confirmed by a clause in the parable of the prodigal son, which informs us, that he went into a far country to feed swine, which would not have been necessary, had these animals been propagated in his own land. It is not inconsistent with this supposition, that in the time of our Lord, the Gadarenes possessed a herd of two thousand swine; for they were a Greek colony;^w or rather, the remains of the Girgashites, the aboriginal inhabitants of that region, as the name Gergesenes, given them by the evangelist Matthew, clearly indicates. Some writers maintain, that Gedara and Gergasa were different cities, inhabited by two distinct races of people; but whatever hypothesis be preferred, it is quite evident, they were not Jewish, but Grecian or Syrian cities, governed by their own laws and customs. Hence, it is by no means wonderful, that they encouraged the breed of an animal to which they felt no particular aversion, although the custom was contrary to the laws and usages of a people, whom, like the rest of the world, they probably despised. Nor was it altogether inconsistent with the design of our Lord's ministry, to pass on certain occasions, the limits of Judea, and visit the dwellings of aliens; for the

^w Joseph. Antiq. b. xvii, ch. 13.

sacred writer informs us, that he departed on a time into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, where he had mercy on a woman of Canaan, who came out of the same coasts, and cured her daughter. He might therefore, with equal reason, favour the Gadarenes with his presence, and give them an illustrious proof of his omnipotent power. Nor is it inconsistent with this conduct, that, according to his own declaration to the disciples, he was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel; for the event proved, that he spake only of the general and immediate object of his mission.^x

Many reasons have been assigned by ancient and modern writers, for the strong antipathy of the Jewish people to this animal; but these it were useless to enumerate, as the ceremonial precept is clear and precise: “And the swine, though he divide the hoof, and be cloven footed, yet he cheweth not the cud: he is unclean unto you;”^y and the transgression of this precept was even followed by the most pointed reproofs, and the severest threatenings. The prophet Isaiah charges his degenerate people with eating swine’s flesh, and having the broth of abominable things in their vessels.^z They had not yet neglected to bring their sacrifices to the altar of Jehovah; but they no longer served their God in sincerity and truth: “He that killeth an ox, is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog’s neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine’s blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.”^a Conduct so contrary to their solemn engage-

^x Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, cap. 57, p. 697.

^y Lev. xi, 7.

^z Isa. lxxv, 4.

^a Ch. lxvi, 3.

ments, so hateful in the sight of the holy One, though long endured, was not always to pass with impunity : “ They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens, behind one tree in the midst, eating swine’s flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the Lord.”^b Such a sacrifice was an abomination to the Lord, both because the eating of blood was prohibited, and because the sacrifice consisted of swine’s flesh ; and to aggravate the sin of the transgressor, such a sacrifice is compared to the killing of a human victim, or the immolation of a dog ; both of which Jehovah regarded with abhorrence. To these precepts and threatenings, which were often supported by severe judgments, may be traced the habitual and unconquerable aversion of that people to the use of swine’s flesh ; an aversion which the most alluring promises, and the most cruel sufferings, have been found alike insufficient to subdue. Happy for them had they been equally attentive to the weightier matters of their law ; happier still had they understood the true nature and design of these institutions, and acquiesced in their abolition, and the introduction of a better dispensation of mercy, at the coming of the promised Messiah.

He has long since appeared in our nature, and has broken down the venerable barriers which separated the chosen people from the Gentile nations, and blessed his church with great light and freedom. Those precepts which he issued in the wilderness, concerning clean and unclean beasts, are now abrogated ; for it is written : “ Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man ; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.”^c

^b Isa. lxvi, 17.

^c Mat. xv, 11.

“What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.”^d The words of Paul are not less clear and precise than those of his Lord: “I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself, --- for the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”^e To the Corinthians he writes, “Meat commendeth us not to God: for neither if we eat, are we the better; neither if we eat not, are we the worse.”^f “Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no questions for conscience’ sake: For the earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof.”^g He teaches the same doctrine in his epistle to the Colossians: “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy-day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath-days: which are a shadow of good things to come; but the body is of Christ. --- Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (touch not, taste not, handle not; which all are to perish in the using), after the commandments and doctrines of men.”^h “Every creature of God is good,” says the same apostle to Timothy, “and nothing is to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving;”ⁱ and to Titus, “To the pure, all things are pure.”^j From these passages, it must be evident to every reflecting and unprejudiced mind, that the apostolic prohibition concerning things strangled, and blood, must have been intended to continue only in force for a time, in condescension to the conscientious scruples of the Jewish converts, who were, at the time that decree was made, all zealous of the law. For if nothing is to be refused, if it be

^d Acts x, 15.^e Rom. xiv, 14.^f 1 Cor. viii, 8.^g Ch. x, 25.^h Col. ii, 16, 20.ⁱ 1 Tim. iv, 4.^j Tit. i, 5.

received with thanksgiving ; if we may eat whatever is exposed for sale ; if meat neither makes a Christian better nor worse,—then things strangled and blood, may also be used, if some special reason do not render it necessary or expedient to refrain.^k

The sacred writers borrow some of their parables from this animal ; thus, in the book of Proverbs the wise man says, “ As a jewel of gold in a swine’s snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion.” The original term denotes the ring, which, in the east, is by way of ornament appended to the nose ; and which in some other parts of Scripture, is translated a nose jewel. The meaning of the proverb is, that a beautiful form and a perverse mind, are as incongruous, as a ring of gold in the snout of that impure animal. The allusion is to an adulterous woman, who transfers her affections from her husband to another, and, like the sow that wallows in the mire, indulges without restraint in the pollutions of illicit love.

An allusion of a different kind, is involved in the direction of our Lord to the multitudes in his sermon on the mount : “ Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.”¹ The pearls mentioned in this passage, denote, according to some writers, the mysteries of the gospel ; and the dogs and swine, wicked and profane men, who regard them with contempt, and persecute those who receive them and sub-

^k The author thinks it improper to enter here, at length, into the controversy respecting the eating of blood. He has carefully weighed the arguments on both sides, and reckons it sufficient for his purpose to state in this summary manner the conclusion which, in his judgment, has the strongest claim to our approbation.

¹ Matt. vii, 6.

mit to their influence. But in this part of his discourse, our Lord is warning his hearers not to be unmerciful and severe in censuring others, in marking and aggravating their faults, nor to correct their vices or mistakes, while they are chargeable themselves with much more heinous crimes. They were not to suffer sin in their brother, but were bound to reprove his faults, and endeavour his reformation; their counsels and reproofs, however, were to be managed with wisdom and prudence, and were not to be unseasonably lavished on hardened and profligate sinners, who, instead of receiving them in a becoming manner, would be exasperated by them, and turn with fury upon their indiscreet advisers. "Give not wisdom," says the Hebrew adage, "to him who knows not its value, for it is more precious than pearls, and he who seeks it not, is worse than a swine that defiles and rolls himself in the mud; so he who knows not the value of wisdom, profanes its glory."

The fierce and truculent disposition ascribed to the hog, in this proverbial saying of Jesus, perfectly corresponds with the natural history of that animal. He is obstinate and untractable; and "of all quadrupeds, the most rude and brutal. All his habits are gross; all his appetites are impure; all his sensations are confined to a furious lust, an insatiable gluttony, and a savage cruelty. He devours indiscriminately every thing that comes in his way; even his own offspring, immediately after their birth."^m His powers of annoyance and destruction are of no ordinary kind.ⁿ He grows, in a wild state, to a very large size; his tusks are from nine to ten inches long; they are flat, sharp, and bend

^m Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. iii, p. 511, 512.

ⁿ Hesiod. Scut. Herc. l. 386-389. Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. x, c. 16.

in a circular form. In the rutting season, he is more ferocious than ever; and when another male appears, he becomes perfectly furious. He prepares for the combat by turning his side directly to his antagonist, and lowering his head; and in this attitude, he waits the attack with fearless intrepidity. Even when the lion, who is particularly fond of his flesh, has marked him for his prey, he “has sometimes been known to defend himself with so much bravery, that the victory has inclined to neither side; the carcasses of them both having been found lying one by the other, torn and mangled to pieces.”^o The usual residence of the wild boar, which differs not in disposition and habits from the domestic, is in the thickest recesses of the forest, or in the reedy marsh; but when roused by hunger, he leaves his native retreats, makes an inroad into the cultivated parts of the country, and, with undistinguishing rage, spreads destruction wherever he comes. From this brief statement it will appear, that the character given to that animal in the passage under consideration, is perfectly correct. It may be thought to refer more properly to the wild boar, than to the domestic hog; but their dispositions are nearly the same, as well as the danger to be apprehended from their ferocity.

The hog delights more in the foetid mire, than in the clear and running stream. The mud is the chosen place of his repose? and to wallow in it, seems to constitute one of his greatest pleasures. To wash him is vain; for he is no sooner at liberty, than he hastens to the puddle, and

^o Dr. Shaw's Trav. vol. i, p. 324. Homer gives the victory to the lion after a long and fierce contest. Lib. xvii, l. 825.—Hesiod says the lions and the wild boars sometimes attack each other in bands, and many fall on both sides. Scutum Herc. l. 168–176.

besmears himself anew. Such is the temper and conduct of corrupt and wicked men, who had escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, but are again entangled, and overcome: the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.— It is happened unto them according to the true proverb: “The dog is turned to his vomit again; and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.”^p Allured by the promises of the gospel, or alarmed by the terrors of the law, they abandoned some of their evil courses, and performed many laudable actions; but, their nature and inclinations remaining unrenewed by divine grace, they quickly shook off the feeble restraints of external reformation, and returned with greater eagerness than ever to their former courses.

The hog was justly classed by the Jews among the vilest animals in the scale of animated nature; and it cannot be doubted, that his keeper generally shared in the contempt and abhorrence which he had excited. The prodigal son in the parable, had spent his all in riotous living, and was ready to perish through want, before he submitted to the humiliating employment of feeding swine. In Egypt, if we may believe Herodotus,^q the swine-herd was numbered with the profane, and forbidden to enter the temples of their gods; and even the lowest dregs of the people refused to give their daughters to him in marriage. Homer, it must be admitted, honours, with many commendations, Eumæus, the swine-herd of Ulysses; but it may be inferred, from the total silence of all other ancient poets, that the station of a swine-herd was extremely contemptible in Greece and the surrounding countries. The pastoral bards, in their Bucolics, divided the keepers of cattle

^p 2 Pet. ii, 22.^q Lib. ii, cap. 47.

into three classes ; the neat-herds, the shepherds, and the goat-herds. Theocritus never once introduces the swine-herd among those who tended the flocks and herds, in his Idylls ; and Virgil observes the same guarded silence, in his Eclogues ; a sure proof that public opinion had placed the keeper of swine among the very refuse of society. These remarks illustrate the miserable condition of the prodigal son, who, by his own mismanagement, fell from a state of affluence and honour, into the deepest indigence and contempt. In want of the necessaries of life, and neglected or despised by every human being, he was fain to accept of the vilest situation on earth, and to allay the agonizing demands of hunger, by feeding among the swine. But this glowing picture of human wretchedness becomes more interesting, when we recollect, that it is intended to display the extreme and diversified wretchedness of the Gentile nations, before the coming of Christ, and the triumphs of his gospel.

Under the beautiful allegory of a vine, the royal Psalmist describes the rise and fall of the Jewish commonwealth, in this address to Jehovah : “ Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt, thou hast cast out the heathen and planted it. Thou preparedst a room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river. Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they that pass by the way, do pluck her ? The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it.”^r This terrible animal is both fierce and cruel, and so swift that few of the savage tribes can outstrip him in

running. His chief abode, says Forbes, is in the forests and jungles : but when the grain is nearly ripe, he commits great ravages in the fields and sugar plantations.^s The powers that subverted the Jewish nation, are compared to the wild boar, and the wild beast of the field, by which the vine is wasted and devoured ; and no figure could be more happily chosen. That ferocious and destructive animal, not satisfied with devouring the fruit, lacerates and breaks with his sharp and powerful tusks, the branches of the vine, or with his snout digs it up by the roots, pollutes it with his touch, or tramples it under his feet. In Egypt, according to Herodotus and other writers, the labours of this ferocious animal are rendered useful to man. When the Nile has retired within his proper channel, the husbandman scatters his grain upon the irrigated soil, and sends out a number of swine, that partly by treading it with their feet, partly by digging it with their snout, immediately turn it up, and by this means cover the seed.^t But in every other part of the world, the hog is odious to the husbandman :

——— “ prima putatur

Hostia sus meruisse mori quia semina pando

Erueret rostro, spemque interceperit anni.”

Ovid. Met.

It was an established custom among the Greeks and Romans, to offer a hog in sacrifice to Ceres, at the beginning of harvest, and another to Bacchus, before they began to gather the vintage ; because that animal is equally hostile to the growing corn, and the loaded vineyard. From these examples it is quite evident that the prophet meant to describe, under the figure of a wild boar, the cruel and implacable enemies of the church. And it is extremely pro-

^s Orient. Mem. vol. ii, p. 276.

^t Lib. ii, cap. 14.

bable, that he alluded to some more remarkable adversary, as Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, or Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon; both of whom, were not less ferocious and destructive, than the savage by which they were symbolized.

The enemies of the church are intended in another periphrasis, by the same writer: "Rebuke the company of the spearmen, (or more literally, the wild beast of the reed), the multitude of the bulls with the calves of the people."^a The wild beast of the reed probably means the boar out of the forest, that fixes his usual residence among the reeds of the marsh, from whence he issues to devastate the neighbouring fields and vineyards:

——— "tenet ima lacunæ

Lenta salix, ulvæque, leves, juncique palustres,

Viminaque, et longa parva sub arundini cannæ;

Hinc aper excitus, medios violentus in hostes

Fertur, ut excussis elisus nubibus ignis."

Ovid. Met.

Some writers, however, understand it of the hippopotamus, that, like the boar, loves to repose "under the shady trees, in the covert of the reeds and fens." It is not easy to determine to which of these stupendous tenants of the marsh, the sacred writer alludes: nor is the question of much importance; for the meaning is the same, and the figure equally beautiful and striking.

^a Ps. lxxviii, 30.

CHAP. VIII.

BEASTS OF PREY.

The Lion.—The Leopard.—The Bear.—The Wolf.—The Hyæna.—

The Fox.

The Lion.

AMONG the beasts of prey to which the Scriptures allude, the first place is due to the lion. That noble animal is strongly made, and of an elegant and majestic form. A stranger to fear, and conscious as it were of his pre-eminent strength, he looks around him with an air of superiority; and when he walks, it is with peculiar gracefulness and ease.^a Isidore and other writers call him the king of beasts.^b The companions of Samson admitted his strength to be equal, at least, to that of the most powerful animal that ranges the forest: “What,” said they, “is stronger than a lion?”^c Solomon, directed by the Spirit of inspiration, proceeds a step farther, and pronounces him the strongest among beasts.^d These statements are confirmed by the testimony of many common writers of undoubted veracity.

Homer declares, that with one shake he breaks the neck of an ox:

Τῆς δ' ἐξ αὐχένι εἰς, λαβὼν κρατερῶσι νοστήσει. *Il. lib. xi, l. 175.*

^a Bochart. Hieroz. lib. iii, p. 713. Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. viii, cap. 17. Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. iv, cap. 34, and lib. v, cap. 39. Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. v, p. 68, 70.

^b Lib. xii, cap. 2. Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. xv, cap. 17.

^c Judges xiv, 18.

^d Prov. xxx, 30.

And assures us, that he sometimes carries off the largest and fattest ox in the herd, and breaks his neck, having first seized him with his strong teeth :

Ὡς δ' ὅτε τις τε λεων ὀρεσιτροφος αλκι πεποιθως

βοσκομένης αγγέλης βουν ἄρπαση, ητις αριστη. *Il. lib. xvii, l. 61, 62.^e*

Mr. Forbes had the singular felicity, when in the East Indies, to see the lion rush furiously on a goat which had been tied to a tree by way of lure, and seizing it by the neck, with one shake break the bone, and instantly deprive the animal of life.^f According to some natural historians, the strength of the lion is so prodigious, that a single stroke of his paw is sufficient to break the back of a horse, and one sweep with his tail will throw a strong man to the ground.^g It is, therefore, with great force and propriety the royal Psalmist, in his pathetic lamentation for Saul and Jonathan, says, “ They were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions.”^h

The courage of the lion is equal to his prodigious strength. Conscious that no beast of the forest dares to disturb his repose, he sleeps in the open air. According to Homer, a lion reared in the mountains, that has been long without food, is impelled by his fearless intrepidity, to attack the crowded fold ; and although he find it guarded by dogs and armed men, he does not abandon his enterprize, but boldly leaps into the midst of the flock and seizes his prey, or is himself wounded by a dart thrown from a skilful hand.ⁱ In another passage, Menelaus yields to Hector, like a full grown lion, which dogs and

^e See also lib. v, l. 160. ^f Oriental Memoirs, vol. iii, p. 92.

^g Aristotel. Hist. lib. i, cap. 1. ^h Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. xii, cap. 39.

ⁱ 2 Sam. i, 23.

ⁱ Iliad, lib. xii, l. 299 ; lib. xviii, l. 461 ; and lib. xvii, l. 109-112. Aristot. Hist. lib. ix, cap. 44.

men have driven with spears and much clamour from the sheep cote ; his resolute heart is deeply affected with grief, and he reluctantly leaves the fold. This beautiful and striking figure, Virgil has imitated in these words :

——— “ *ceu sævum turba leonem*

Cum telis premit infensis, at territus ille,

Asper, acerba tuens, retro redit. Et neque terga

Ira dare aut virtus patitur, nec tendere contra

Ille, quidem hoc cupiens, potis est per tela virosque.”

Æn. lib. ix, l. 791.

“ As with annoying darts, a troop of hunters persecute a fierce lion ; while the appalled savage, surly, louting stern, flinches back, nor rage, nor courage, suffer him to fly ; nor can he, for darts and men (though fain indeed he would), make head against them.”^j

Still more sublime and beautiful are the figures of the sacred writers ; while their striking similarity proves that they drew them from the same source, they copied from the same works : “ For thus hath the Lord spoken unto me, Like as the lion and the young lion roaring on his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, he will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them : so shall the Lord of hosts come down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof.”^k The fearless courage of this destroyer was never described with greater energy and elegance, than by the prophet Nahum : “ Where is the dwelling of the lions, and the feeding place of the young lions, where the lion, even the old lion walked, and the lions’ whelp, and none made him afraid ? The lion did tear in pieces enough for his whelps, and strangled for his lionesses, and filled his holes with prey, and his dens with ravin.”^l

^j Davidson.

^k Isa. xxxi, 4.

^l Nah. ii, 11, 12.

This noble animal has been considered as the most perfect model of boldness and courage in every age, and among every people acquainted with his history; and to say that a man is bold as a lion, is to reward his intrepidity with the highest degree of praise: "He that is valiant," said Hushai to Absalom, "whose heart is as the heart of a lion, shall utterly melt."^m He never flies from the hunters, nor is frightened by their onset. But if their number forces him to yield, he retires slowly, step by step, frequently turning upon his pursuers.ⁿ Such is the fearless intrepidity which the unequivocal tokens of divine favour, and the approbation of a good conscience, impart to the mind of a righteous person: "The wicked flee when no man pursueth, but the righteous are bold as a lion."^o The Greek and Roman authors abound in the same figures; Homer says that Hercules had the heart of a lion, (*θυμολεοντα*), and he distinguishes Achilles by the same epithet.

The courage of the lion prompts him to go in quest of his prey, and to meet it in the open field; he has been known to attack a whole caravan, and when obliged to retire, he always retires fighting, and with his face to his enemy.^p To this trait in his character, Job seems to allude in his complaint to God: "Thou huntest me as a fierce lion." There are times, however, when he does not disdain to lie in wait for his prey, and spring suddenly upon it from his lurking place. To this less honourable habit, the Psalmist alludes in his description of a wicked man: "He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den; he lieth in wait to catch the poor."^q

^m 2 Sam. xvii, 10.

ⁿ Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. ix, c. 44.

^o Prov. xxviii, 1.

^p Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. iv, cap. 34.

^q Ps. x, 9.

When stung with hunger, his fierceness and rage are terrible; at such a time, no precaution which the traveller or the shepherd can use, and no exertion which either the one or the other can make, are sufficient to divert or repel his attack. For want of other food, this devourer, as he is emphatically called in Scripture, will often tear to pieces the hapless passenger, or the tenant of the unguarded hamlet. Fire is what he is most afraid of; yet, notwithstanding the frequent fires with which the Arabian shepherds encircle their flocks; notwithstanding the barking of their dogs, and their own repeated cries and exclamations during the whole night, when he is suspected to be upon the prey,—it frequently happens that the ravenous animal, outbraving all these terrors, will leap into the midst of the fold where the cattle are enclosed, and drag from thence a sheep or a goat.^r He commonly deprives the victim of life by a stroke of his paw, accompanying the fatal blow with a tremendous roar; he then tears it in pieces, breaks all its bones, and devours it with the utmost greediness. To these circumstances, the sacred writers frequently allude. In the blessing of Gad, we find Moses expressing himself thus: “He dwelleth as a lion, and teareth the arm with the crown of the head;” and the royal Psalmist, in still more striking terms: “Save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me; lest he tear my soul like a lion, rending it in pieces when there is none to deliver.”^s Hezekiah, in his sickness, complained, “I reckoned till morning that as a lion, so will he break all my bones;”^t and said the prophet in the name of the Lord, “I will be unto Ephraim as a

^r Shaw's Trav. vol. i, p. 314. Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. xii, cap. 7, and lib. vii, cap. 6. Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. v, p. 82.

^s Psa. vii, 2.

^t Isa. xxxviii, 4.

lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah ; I, even I, will tear and go away, I will take away, and none shall rescue him."^u

The voracious greediness of this terrible animal, is remarked by every natural historian ; and it has not been overlooked by the sacred writers. The Psalmist compares the wicked " to a lion that is greedy of his prey, and to a young lion that lurketh in secret places ;" the murderous enemies of our Redeemer " gaped upon him with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion." Samson characterizes the lion in his riddle, " the eater," or, as it may be rendered, the devourer ; and the prophet Jeremiah employs a term of similar import : " Your own sword hath devoured your prophets like a destroying lion." ^v In one of the most awful threatenings ever uttered by Jehovah, we find the following allusion ; " There will I devour them like a lion ; the wild beast shall tear them." ^w

No creature, when provoked, is so tremendously furious as the lion. He beats his sides and the ground with his tail, agitates his shaggy mane, moves the skin of his face, and knits his large eye-brows ; shews his dreadful tusks, and thrusts out his tongue, which is armed with prickles, so hard, that it alone is sufficient to tear the skin and the flesh, without the assistance of either teeth or claws.^x This description will enable the reader to form an adequate idea of the warlike appearance of certain Gadites, in the train of David, " whose faces," says the inspired writer, " were like the faces of lions." ^y

The movements of a lion, except when he rushes on the

^u Hos. v, 14.

^v Jer. ii, 30.

^w Hos. xiii, 8.

^x Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. iv, cap. 34. Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. viii, cap. 19. Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. v, p. 71, 84. Oppian. de Venatione, lib. iii, l. 8. His face and his neck are terrible.

^y 1 Chron. xii, 8.

prey, are slow, firm, and majestic. Among the Arabian writers, the man who moves with a proud and solemn step is said to walk as a lion.^z The wise man, who was deeply skilled in natural history, makes an observation of the same kind: "There be three things which go well, yea, four are comely in going. A lion, which is strongest among beasts, and turneth not away from any; a grey-hound; an he-goat also; and a king, against whom there is no rising up."^a

The roaring of a lion in quest of his prey, resembles the sound of distant thunder; and being re-echoed by the rocks and mountains, appals the whole race of animals, and puts them instantly to flight; but he frequently varies his voice into a hideous scream or yell.^b "When the lion roars," says Sparman, "the beasts of the forest can do nothing but quake; they are afraid to lie still in their dens, lest he spring upon them: and equally afraid to run, lest, in attempting to escape, they should take the direction in which he is prowling, and throw themselves into the jaws of their adversary."^c No book is more accurate than the Scriptures, even on subjects of natural history, so far as their sublime design admits. The universal terror which the roaring of a lion produces, is noticed by the prophet Amos: "The lion has roared, who will not fear? the Lord God has spoken, who will not prophesy?" Hence the terror which the thunder of his voice inspires, is not confined to a few of the weaker animals; the fellest savage that ranges the forest, according to the prophet, is as unable

^z Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. v, p. 84. Bochart. Hieroz. vol. ii, lib. ii, cap. 2, p. 728. ^a Prov. xxx, 29, 30.

^b Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. v, p. 83. Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, c. 2, p. 729.

^c Voyage to the Cape of Good Hope, vol. ii, chap. 11, p. 39.

to resist its influence, as the seer is, the voice of Jehovah. Even the variation of his appalling voice into the hideous scream or yell, is recorded by Jeremiah: "The young lions roared upon him, and yelled, and they made his land waste."^d

The lion, it is said, never roars but when he is in sight of his prey, or in the act of striking it down with his paw. His voice is, therefore, the signal of attack, and commonly of inevitable destruction; a circumstance which must greatly increase the general terror and dismay.^e "Will a lion roar in the forest," said Amos, "when he hath no prey? Will a young lion cry out of his den if he have taken nothing?"^f The invariable connection between the roaring of the lion and the seizing of his prey, is also referred to by the holy Psalmist: "The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God;"^g and by the prophet, "For thus hath the Lord spoken unto me, Like as the lion, and the young lion roaring on his prey --- so shall the Lord of hosts come down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof."^h "The young lions roared upon him, and yelled, and they made his land waste."ⁱ There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey: they have devoured souls."^j The same allusion occurs in Ezekiel's parable of the lion's whelps: "He became a young lion, and learned to catch the prey, and devoured men. And he knew their desolate palaces, and laid waste their cities; and the land was desolate, and the fulness thereof, by the noise of his roaring."^k In this passage the antecedent is put for the

^d Jer. ii, 15.^e Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, cap. 2, p. 729.^f Amos iii, 4.^g Psa. civ, 21.^h Isa. xxxi, 4.ⁱ Jer. ii, 15.^j Ezek. xxii, 25.^k Ezek. xix, 6, 7.

consequent; for, the lion, strictly speaking, does not waste a country by his roaring, but by what invariably follows, the miserable destruction of men, and flocks, and herds.

The deep and terrific intonations of the lion's voice furnish the sacred writers with many beautiful and striking figures, with which they have adorned their magnificent descriptions. So great are the terror and dismay which his roaring produces, that many animals, that by their swiftness might escape from his fury, astonished and petrified by the sound of his voice, are rendered incapable of exertion.¹ This allusion is involved in these words of Elihu to Job: "After it a voice roareth: he thundereth with the voice of his excellency; and he will not stay them when his voice is heard."^m A very fearful denunciation of divine wrath, is ushered in by the prophet in these words: "The Lord shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation; he shall mightily roar upon his habitation; he shall give a shout as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth."ⁿ The prophet Joel uses the same figure, with a slight variation: "The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake."^o The tumultuous noise of conflicting warriors, is, with great beauty and effect, compared by the Psalmist to the roaring of a lion: "Thine enemies roar in the midst of thy congregations, they set up their ensign for signs."^p The strong cries of the Saviour, in the hour of his most poignant sufferings for the sins of his people, are represented under the same figure: "Why art thou so far from the words of my roaring?" And the sorrows of David

¹ Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, cap. 2, p. 729. ^m Job xxxvii, 4.

ⁿ Jer. xxv, 30. ^o Joel iii, 16. ^p Ps. lxxiv, 4.

himself: "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old, through my roaring all the day long."¹ In the same manner, the term is used by the Greeks to signify the voice of lamentation: "The man who drinks poison," says an ancient Greek writer, "roars, that is, laments with a loud voice."

The prophet Jeremiah, by a catachresis rather unusual, makes the young lion bray like an ass. They shall roar together as lions; they shall yell, or as the word properly signifies, bray as lions' whelps. But the bold figure of the prophet, is vindicated by the prince of Latin poets:

—— "iræque leonum

Vincula recusantum et sera sub nocte rudentum."

Æn. lib. vii, l. 16.

"The rage of lions reluctant to the chains, and braying at the late midnight hour."

When the lion has seized his prey, he calls his whelps to the feast, by uttering a sound which resembles the bellowing of a calf.² The assertion of Plutarch is verified in the lines of Theocritus, where he compares the lamentations of Agave, the mother of Pentheus, over her dead son, to the bellowing of a lioness:

Ὅσσον περ τοκάδος τελεθεῖ μνημα λαιῆνης.³

In the book of Revelation, the apostle John uses the same figure: "And the angel cried with a loud voice, as when a lion belloweth (for so the original term signifies), and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices."⁴

The tremendous roar which the lion utters in the act of seizing his prey, softens, the moment he has killed it, into

¹ *Psa.* xxii, 2, and xxxii, 3.

² *Plutarch de Terrestribus et Aquaticis Animalibus.*

³ *Theoc. in Bacchis.*

⁴ *Rev.* x, 3.

a deep and hollow murmur. Thus, when Hippomene and Malanta were metamorphosed into lions, instead of words they uttered a low murmuring sound :

“ Iram vultus habet, pro verbis murmura reddunt.” *Ovid.*

Equally minute and exact as the poetical fabulist, is the prophet of Jehovah : “ For thus hath the Lord spoken unto me, like as the lion, and the young lion roaring, or (as the word signifies) *murmuring* on his prey,” when he is tearing it to pieces, and drinking its blood. It is the same word which the Spirit of God employs to express the muttering sounds emitted by the wizards of ancient times, of which the following example is quoted from the prophecies of Isaiah : “ And when they shall say unto you, seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter.”^v

The manner in which the inspired writers speak of the lion’s mouth, would naturally lead to the conclusion, that it is formed to strike a beholder with terror. “ Deliver me from the mouth of the lion,”^w was the earnest prayer of David’s Son and Lord, in the day of his calamity. The prophet Daniel replied with peculiar emphasis, to the mournful inquiries of Darius : “ My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions’ mouths that they have not hurt me.”^x The pointed allusion of Paul is not less remarkable : “ I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion ;”^y and in the estimation of the same writer, to stop “ the mouths of lions,” was one of the noblest achievements of ancient martyrs.^z Nor is it an accidental circumstance in the description of the beast, which John beheld in vision rise up out of the sea, that he had a “ mouth as

^u See also *Æneid*, lib. vi, l. 492, 493.

^v *Is.* viii, 19.

^w *Ps.* xxii, 21.

^x *Dan.* vi, 22.

^y *2 Tim.* iv, 17.

^z *Heb.* xi, 33.

the mouth of a lion.”^a These hints entirely correspond with the natural history of that animal. His mouth is very large ; his jaws are exceeding strong, and armed with a row of long and massy teeth.^b When he ranges the forest in search of his prey, the moment he spies the victim, he yawns hideously, rears his hair on end, and with a horrid yell seizes it, and bathes in blood his ravenous jaws :

“ Gaudet hians immane, comasque arrexit, et hæret

Visceribus super incumbens : lavit imbroba teter

Ora cruor.”

Æneid. lib. x, l. 726.

In any animal, the teeth, and especially the grinders, excel all the other bones in hardness and solidity ; but the teeth of the lion are so extremely hard, that they are selected by the inspired writers to represent the most destructive agents of nature or art. Thus, the prophet Joel summoned his countrymen to weeping and lamentation, and assigned this reason : “ For a nation is come up upon my land, strong, and without number, whose teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek teeth of a great lion,”^c—strong, well-proportioned, and deeply grooved. In the book of Revelation, the mystical locusts had “ teeth as the teeth of lions.”^d When the oppressor is deprived of his power, the teeth of the lion, in the figurative language of Scripture, are said to be broken : “ By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed. The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the fierce lion, and the teeth of the young lions are broken.”^e This figure the royal Psalmist has adopted in his prayer against the wicked : “ Break their teeth, O

^a Rev. xiii, 2.

^b Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. viii, cap. 21. Bochart, Hieroz. lib. ii, c. 2, p. 733.

^c Joel i, 6.

^d Rev. ix, 8.

^e Job iv, 9, 10.

God, in their mouth; break out the teeth of the young lions, O Lord.”^f The strict propriety of the figure, is attested by the lines of a Grecian bard: Nature has given horns to the bulls, hoofs to the horses, swiftness to the hares, a huge mouth armed with teeth to the lions.

Δεισι χασμ' ὀδοντων.

Anac. Ode ii.

The lion's paw is in Scripture called his hand, and represented as not less formidable than his teeth. “David said moreover, the Lord that delivered me out of the paw (or hand) of the lion, and out of the paw (or hand) of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.”^g The king of Persia made a decree, commanding his subjects to fear the living God, “who hath delivered Daniel from the power (or hand) of the lions.”^h Bochart contends, that there is no catachresis in this mode of speaking, as learned men generally suppose; for the fore-feet of the lion, which he chiefly uses in tearing his prey, while he rests upon his hind-feet, may truly and properly be called his hands.ⁱ The Greek writers familiarly speak of the lion's hand, by which they mean his fore-foot. Oppian says, in his third book, the lion carries a torpedo under his right hand (Δεξιτερην υπο χειρα), alluding probably to the overwhelming terror which seizes the victim, when it sees him preparing to give it the fatal blow. The lion's paw is armed with very long and sharp claws, which render it still more formidable; and as if he knew how much he surpassed the other animals in this respect, it has been remarked, that he guards them with the greatest care.^j It is therefore with strict propriety, that David so particularly mentions the kindness of God, in saving him

^f Ps. lviii, 6.

^h Dan. vi, 27.

^g 1 Sam. xvii, 37.

ⁱ Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, c. 2, p. 734.

^j Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, cap. 2, p. 735. Herodot. lib. iii, cap. 108.

from the paw of that terrible destroyer, and calls it a hand, (in which he has been followed by the classical writers of antiquity,) because it is the instrument with which the savage beast knocks down and tears his prey.

He is a solitary animal, and fixes his abode in the woods and mountains, far removed from the dwellings of men. When he goes forth in quest of his prey, he will not admit the company even of his mate.^k This unsocial and gloomy disposition, is frequently marked in the sacred volume. Thus Jeremiah threatens the degenerate nobles of Judah : “ Wherefore a lion out of the forest shall slay them.”¹ In the twelfth chapter, we find the same allusion : “ Mine heritage is unto me as a lion in the forest : it crieth out against me, therefore have I hated it.” That the depth of the forest is his chosen haunt, and not the place of his accidental residence, is still more evident from the interrogation of Amos : “ Will a lion roar in the forest when he hath no prey ?”^m Theocritus, in his first Idyll, adverts to this habit : “ Even the lion out of the wood lamented him when dying :”

Τηνον χ' ὡς ἐκ ὄρυμοιο λέων ἀνεκλαυσε θανόντα.

But his favourite retreats are on the declivities of woody mountains, whither he retires from the plains, after being satiated with prey. This fact is recognized in the blessing which Moses pronounced on Dan before he died : “ Dan is a lion’s whelp : he shall leap from Bashan.”ⁿ The inferior summits of Lebanon swarm with lions and other wild beasts, which has given occasion to that animated address by the Saviour to his church : “ Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon : look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon,

^k *Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. iv, cap. 3.*

¹ *Jer. v, 6.*

^m *Amos iii, 4.*

ⁿ *Deut. xxxiii, 22.*

from the lion's den, from the mountains of the leopards."^o The circumstance has not escaped the notice of uninspired bards; from one of whom we give the following quotation:

"Optat aprum, aut fulvum descendere monte leonem."

Æneid. lib. iv, l. 159.

He wishes that a boar or a tawny lion would descend from the mountain; and, in a former quotation, Homer insinuates, that the strongest and fiercest lions were (*ορεσσιγενες*) reared in the mountains. But when stung with hunger, they descend from their elevated retreats into the plain and cultivated parts of the country, to prowl about the sheep-cotes or the villages, and often commit dreadful ravages on the defenceless inhabitants.^p The Cuthites, whom the king of Assyria brought from Babylon, and placed in the cities of Samaria, suffered exceedingly from the depredations of these ruthless destroyers at the beginning of their settlement.^q It is no uncommon thing, as appears from the language of the sluggard, to find these dangerous animals ranging the streets of their unwalled towns and villages: "The slothful man saith there is a lion without: I shall be slain in the streets;" and in another proverb, "There is a lion in the way; a lion is in the streets."^r Buffon, following Pliny, Eustathius, and other ancient naturalists, informs us, "that while young and nimble, the lion subsists by hunting, and seldom quits the deserts or the forests, where he finds plenty of wild animals; but when he grows old, heavy, and less fit for the exercise of hunting, he approaches frequented places, and becomes more dangerous to man and the domestic ani-

^o Song iii, 8.

^p Plin. Hist. Natur. lib. viii, cap. 16.

^q 2 Kings xvii, 24.

^r Prov. xxii, 13, and xxvi, 13.

mals. It has, indeed, been remarked, that when he sees men and animals together, he attacks the latter, and never the former, unless any man strike him; for in this case he is wonderfully alert in distinguishing the person who hurts him, and he instantly quits his prey to take vengeance on the offender."^s These traits in his character, explain the reason that God so often threatens to be as a lion to his ancient people. He discerns at once who it is that transgresses his law, and is prompt in taking vengeance on the sinner. They also throw light on a passage in the prophecies of Hosea: "For I will be unto Ephraim as a great lion," that leaves the forest and approaches the habitations of men, and is therefore more to be dreaded; "and to the house of Judah as a young lion," that hunts his prey in the desert or the forest, and is therefore less to be feared.^t How exactly this corresponds with historical fact, is well known to every careful reader of the Scriptures; for Ephraim, or the ten tribes, were driven away from their own land into a distant region, where they were doomed to suffer a very protracted exile; while Judah continued to hold his possessions an hundred and thirty-three years longer, and when carried into captivity at the end of that period by the king of Babylon, it was only for the short term of seventy years, till the land had enjoyed her sabbaths.

The lion has his den in a cave or thorny brake, or among the thick trees, where he sometimes lies in wait for his prey.^u Thither he carries the spoils of the chase, with which he feeds his whelps, or satisfies the demands of his

^s Nat. Hist. vol. v, p. 85. See also Plin. Hist. Nat. lib. viii, cap. 16. Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. iv, cap. 34.

^t Hos. v, 14.

^u Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, cap. 2, p. 737.

own ravenous maw. Nahum alludes to this invariable practice in these words: "He filled his holes with prey, and his dens with ravin." And said Jehovah to the sorrowful and humbled Job, "Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion? or fill the appetite of the young lions, when they couch in their dens, and abide in the covert to lie in wait."^v

Like other wild beasts, he slumbers in his covert during the day, that he may return at night to the chace with renovated vigour: "Thou makest darkness, and it is night, wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth. The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God. The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens."^w

Although the lion fearlessly meets his antagonist in the open field, in this respect differing from leopards and some other beasts of prey, that never openly attack the fated victim, yet this bold and noble animal often descends to stratagem and ambuscade: "He couches in his den, and abides in the covert to lie in wait." He watches the approach of his victim with cautious attention, carefully avoiding the least noise, lest he should give warning of his presence and designs. Such has the glowing pencil of David painted the insidious conduct of the murderer: "He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den: he lieth in wait to catch the poor --- he croucheth and humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones."^x "Like as a lion that is greedy of his prey, and as it were a young lion lurking in secret places."^y Statius thus describes the lion watching in his den:

—— "sævo speculantur ab antro
Aut cervum aut nondum, bellantum fronte juvenum." Lib. vii, l. 670.

^v Job xxxviii, 39. Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. v, p. 81, 82.

^w Psa. civ, 20. ^x Psa. x, 10. ^y Psa. xvii, 12.

From his lurking place, he commonly leaps upon the victim at one spring. So, in the farewell prediction of Moses, it is foretold, “Dan is a lion’s whelp, he shall leap from Bashan.” This fact is attested by all the ancient historians: Aristotle asserts, that when the lion judges himself within reach, he throws himself upon his prey;^z Pliny says, he leaps with a bound;^a and Solinus, when he is in full pursuit, he springs forward upon the game. When he leaps on his prey, says Buffon, he makes a spring of twelve or fifteen feet. In the same manner acted Dan; proceeding, as it were, by a single bound, from the one extremity of Canaan to the other, he invaded the city of Laish, which, after its reduction, he called by his own name.

The incursions of that powerful and merciless destroyer, into the inhabited country, are commonly attended with horrible devastation.^b Every intelligent reader of the Scriptures will discover many proofs of this assertion, of which only one or two can be quoted. The first is from the prophecies of Balaam concerning the future prosperity of Israel: “Behold the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion; he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain.”^c The second is quoted from the song of Hezekiah, after he was recovered from his sickness: “I reckoned till morning, that as a lion, so will he break all my bones.”^d He breaks the bones of his prey with his teeth; he tears them to pieces with his nails, and rends them asunder. When the accusers of Daniel were cast into the lions’ den, the prophet informs us, “The lions had the mastery of them,

^z Hist. lib. ix, cap. 44.

^a Lib. viii, cap. 16.

^b Bochart Hieroz. lib. ii, cap. 2, p. 739, 740.

^c Num. xxiii, 24.

^d Isa. xxxviii, 13.

and brake all their bones in pieces, or ever they came at the bottom of the den.”^e In Homer, the son of Atreus in battle resembles a lion that singles out for inevitable destruction, an ox, the best of the herd; having put the rest to flight, he breaks his neck, having first seized him with his strong tusks.^f And Horace addresses Chloe in the twenty-third ode of the second book,

“ Atqui non ego te, tigris ut aspera

Getulusve leo, frangere persequor.”

The full import of the verb to break, in these quotations, may be learned from a passage in the prophecies of Hosea, where Jehovah threatens the ten tribes for their apostacy: “ Therefore, I will be unto them as a lion; as a leopard by the way will I observe them; I will meet them as a bear bereaved of her whelps, and will rend the caul of their heart, and there will I devour them like a lion; the wild beast shall tear them.”^g The prophet knew that the lion aims chiefly at the heart, which he no sooner lays bare, than he greedily devours and drinks its blood. When the lion, says Homer, has rent a fawn to pieces, he carries it off to his den and tears out its tender heart.^h

According to the prophets, entire regions are sometimes depopulated by his fury: “ The young lions roared upon him, and yelled, and they made his land waste.”ⁱ His devastations are depicted in still more vivid colours in a following chapter: “ The lion is come up from his thicket, and the destroyer of the Gentiles is on his way; he is gone forth from his place to make thy land desolate, and thy cities shall be laid waste without an inhabitant.”^j These, it must be admitted, are mystical lions, the Cæsars and

^e Dan. vi, 24.

^g Hos. xiii, 8.

ⁱ Jer. ii, 15.

^f Iliad, lib. xi, l. 175.

^h Lib. xi, l. 113-115.

^j Jer. iv, 7.

Alexanders, whom incensed heaven raises up to punish the nations for their iniquity ; but the name of lions is assigned to them, because the valour of a conqueror and the rage of a lion, produce the same deplorable effects. Jehovah accordingly threatens to send wild beasts among his ancient people, which should rob them of their children, and destroy their cattle, and make them few in number, and their highways should be desolate.^k

Nature, it is pretended by some writers, has provided for the safety of mankind, by appointing that the lioness shall bring forth but once in her life, and only one cub. Such is the opinion of Herodotus, and many other ancients ;^l but it is contradicted by Homer, who asserts more than once, that the lion rears a number of whelps ;^m and by a much higher authority, the Spirit of inspiration. The prophet Ezekiel, in his parable of the lions' whelps, puts this question : " What is thy mother ? A lioness : she lay down among lions, she nourished her whelps among young lions. And she brought up one of her whelps ; it became a young lion, and it learned to catch the prey ; it devoured men."ⁿ Nahum bears his testimony to the same fact : " The lion did tear in pieces enough for his whelps, and strangled for his lionesses."^o Ancient writers are much divided in relation to the number of whelps the lioness brings forth at a birth, and the number of times she goes with young. Eustathius inclines to the opinion advanced

^k Lev. xxvi, 22. Instances of this terrible calamity are mentioned by Diodorus, lib. iii, p. 115 ; by Ælian, lib. xvii, cap. 41 ; and other ancient writers, quoted by Bochart, lib. ii, cap. 2, p. 741.

^l Lib. iii, cap. 108. Plin. Hist. Nat. lib. viii, cap. 16. Aristot. Hist. lib. vi, cap. 31. Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. iv, cap. 34.

^m Iliad, lib. xvii, l. 133.—ὥς τις τε λέων περι οἷσι τεκεσσιν ; and lib. xviii, l. 318, 319.

ⁿ Ezek. xix, 2.

^o Nah. ii, 12.

by some, that she brings forth two cubs, because she has two teats. Philostratus writes, that she has whelps three times ; the first time she produces three, the second time two, and the last time one, surpassing all the others in beauty of form and ferocity of disposition.^p But, as the determination of this point involves the illustration of no text of Scripture, it falls not within the object of this work ; it is sufficient to observe, that the united and harmonious testimony of these ancient writers fully vindicates the language used by the sacred writers on this head.

The lion was of old among the agents which the Judge of all the earth employed to execute his vengeance on corrupt and impenitent nations. He delivered the remnant of Moab that escaped from the sword, to the devouring jaws of that destroyer ; and in the same manner he punished the Cuthites, that Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, sent from Babylon to occupy the cities of Samaria, for their idolatries. In the punishment of more private offenders, we find him often engaged ; he killed the prophet who disobeyed the express command of God, not to eat bread nor drink water in Bethel, nor to return by the same road ; and the man who refused to smite the prophet, who required him to do so in the name of the Lord.^q

Although the lion is the terror of the forest, and has been known to scatter destruction over the fairest regions of the east ; yet he is often compelled to yield to the superior prowess or address of man. When Samson, the

^p Ælian affirms that she brings forth five times ; five whelps at the first litter, four at the second, three at the third, two at the fourth, and last of all one. Lib. iv, cap. 34. And Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, cap. 2, p. 743.

^q 1 Kings xiii, 24, and xx, 35, 36.

champion of Israel, went down to Timnath, a city belonging to the tribe of Dan, situated in the valley of Sorek, so renowned for the excellence of its vines, a young lion roared against him ; “ and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand.”^r In this instance, the lion was only giving the usual signal for the attack which he meditated, and consequently his kindling passions had not reached their highest excitement; but it appears from the authentic page of history, that the prey is sometimes rescued from his devouring jaws, when his fury is excited to the highest degree of intensity. To this circumstance, the prophet Amos refers, in that part of his prophecy where he describes the extreme difficulty with which a few of the meaner and poorer inhabitants of Samaria, should escape from the power of their enemies: “ Thus saith the Lord, as the shepherd taketh out of the mouth of the lion, two legs or a piece of an ear, so shall the children of Israel be taken out that dwell in Samaria.” The daring intrepidity, the admirable presence of mind, and great strength of David, when he tended his father’s flocks in the wilderness, were subjected to a severe trial, by the attack of a lion, which he thus relates to Saul: “ Thy servant kept his father’s sheep; and there came a lion and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock; and I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth; and when he rose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him: thy servant slew both the lion and the bear.”^s In these words, the youthful shepherd indisputably details the particulars of two exploits per-

^r Jud. xiv, 15.

^s 1 Sam. xvii, 34. Sacred Zoology, Christ. Mag. vol. vi.—Bear.

formed on different occasions; for the lion and the bear never hunt in company. Like the greater part of other wild beasts, they prowl alone, rejecting the society of even one of their own species. “It is not therefore to be supposed, they will associate on such occasions with other animals. A careless reader might imagine that David encountered them both at the same time, and Castalio has been so inconsiderate as to make the text speak this language; for he translates it, There came a lion, *unacum*, together or in company with a bear. But are we to suppose, that these two animals, contrary to their nature, entered into partnership on this occasion, and that to seize upon one poor lamb, and divide it between them? “Or if no miracle was wrought in the case, but the victory was achieved by the natural strength and resolution of David, aided by the good providence of God, how many hands must we suppose him to have had, in order at once to seize two such animals, to smite them both, and to rescue the lamb” from their jaws? How was it possible for a single youth, for at that time he was not more than twenty years of age, to encounter with success two of the strongest and fiercest beasts that range the forest? Or if David vanquished these terrible depredators, not by his own courage and address, but by the miraculous assistance of Heaven, still the difficulty is not removed; for he could have no warrant from such a victory to encounter Goliath. It became him to enter the lists with the giant, depending upon the ordinary assistance of God, and the usual vigour of his own arm, not upon a miracle, which God had not promised. To avoid these inconveniences, it is necessary to admit, that David mentions two different rencounters, one with a lion, and another with a bear; in both which he succeeded in rescuing the prey from the

devourer. This hypothesis has the advantage of being perfectly consistent with the text ; for the particle rendered and, is often disjunctive, and ought to be translated or. Thus, in the law of the passover, it is commanded, “ Ye shall take it out from the sheep or from the goats;”^t and in the precept for securing reverence to parents, “ He that smiteth his father or his mother, shall be surely put to death ;” “ and he that curseth his father or his mother, shall surely be put to death ;”^u in all which, the connecting particle is the same. But by the law of Moses, only one lamb, or one kid, was to be taken for each household, not two ; and if a person smote, or cursed one of his parents, he was guilty of death ; in these cases, therefore, the particle is properly rendered or ; and by consequence, may be so rendered in the text under consideration. The words of David would then run this : There came a lion or a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock. This version is also required by the verb, which, instead of being in the plural, as the conjunctive particle demands, is in the singular number, which clearly indicates a disjunctive sense. This is confirmed by the next verse, in which David speaks of them in the singular number : “ And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth ; and when he rose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him.” If these two animals had been in company, he could with no propriety have spoken of them in this manner. The meaning therefore is, there came a lion on one occasion, and on another a bear, and took each a lamb out of the flock ; and he went out against each of them, and rescued the lamb from his mouth. Thus, by the favour of providence, did the future shepherd of Israel, on two different occasions, slay both the lion and

^t Exod. xii, 5. ^u Ch. xxi, 15, 17.

the bear. Nor ought this to be reckoned an achievement beyond the power of a single combatant ; for an ancient poet only admits it to be extremely dangerous, and almost beyond the powers of man, to deliver the prey from the mouth of a hungry lion, but does not venture to pronounce it impracticable :

“ *Esurienti leoni ex ore exsculpere prædam.*”

Nor is any mistake imputable to David, when he speaks of seizing a bear by the beard, for the original term sometimes denotes the chin ; as in this precept of the ceremonial law : “ If a man or woman have a plague upon the head or beard ; then the priest shall see the plague.”^v He, therefore, seized the lion by his beard, and the bear, that was not favoured with this ornament, by the chin ; which entirely removes the difficulty.

The sacred writer has recorded another instance in Beniah, the son of Jehoiada, who “ went down and slew a lion in the midst of a pit, in time of snow.”^w Whether Beniah, listening only to the suggestions of undaunted courage, or because he could not otherwise reach the shaggy destroyer, went down of his own accord into the pit ; or whether, as Bochart contends,^x he was driven by a storm of snow to take shelter, by accident, in the same pit where the lion had taken refuge just before, from the severity of the weather,—is of little importance ; the fact of his encountering a lion, in these unfavourable circumstances, and killing him, is certain. Nor are such instances wanting in the common page of history. Curtius relates in the beginning of his eighth book, that Alexander the Great singly encountered a lion of unusual magnitude,

^v Lev. xiii, 29.

^w 2 Sam. xxiii, 20.

^x Hieroz. lib. iii, cap. 4, p. 758.

which rushed out upon him, and by one blow laid him dead at his feet: he tells a similar story of Lysimachus, when he was hunting in Syria. But this method of destroying the lion is attended with great danger, and sometime proves fatal to the assailant; and, therefore, stratagem is commonly preferred to force. He is hunted with large dogs, supported by men on horseback, who dislodge, and force him to retire. But, among the Arabians, the common method is to dig a pit in the spot which he is observed to haunt, which they cover slightly with reeds or small branches of trees, and fixing a live animal upon it, they frequently decoy and catch him.^y Pliny has mentioned the same practice, to which the prophet Ezekiel alludes: "Then the nations set against him on every side, from the provinces, and spread their net over him; he was taken in their pit."^z The manner in which this is done, Xenophon describes at considerable length: They dig a large circular pit, and at night introduce into it a goat, which they bind to a stake or pillar of earth at the bottom, and then inclose the pit with a hedge of branches, that it cannot be seen, leaving no entrance. The savage beast hearing in the night the voice of the goat, prowls around the hedge, and finding no opening, leaps over, and is taken.^a When the hunter proposes to catch him in the toils, he stretches a series of nets in a semicircular form, by means of long poles fixed in the ground; three men are placed in ambush, among the nets; one in the middle, and one at each extremity. The toils being disposed in this manner, some wave flaming torches; others make a

^y Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. v, p. 85. Shaw's Trav. vol. i, p. 314.

^z Ezek. xix, 8. Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. viii, cap. 21.

^a Xenophon. de Venatione, ed. Leunclavii, p. 995.

noise by beating their shields, knowing that lions are not less terrified by loud sounds than by fire. The men on foot and horseback, skilfully combining their movements, and raising a mighty bustle and clamour, rush in upon them, and impel them towards the nets, till, intimidated by the shouts of the hunters, and the glare of the torches, they approach the snares of their own accord, and are entangled in the folds.^b

To destroy the lion, and other beasts of prey, was anciently thought no small part of a warrior's glory. The faithful page of sacred history informs us, that the first oppressors of their fellow-men, endeavoured to conciliate the favourable opinion of the public, by distinguishing themselves in the chase. So late as the time of the crusades, the destruction of a lion was reckoned, by the kings and princes who engaged in those insane enterprises, an exploit worthy of being engraved on their seals, and celebrated in the songs of their bards. The simple memorials in the Old Testament, of the courage and address displayed by various individuals, in single combat with the lion, prove more forcibly, than long and laboured details, the terrible character of that animal, and the severe calamities which the inhabitants of those countries occasionally suffer from his assaults. We discover many qualities in him, which command our admiration and praise; but we also detect many which excite detestation and horror. In the sacred volume, the lion accordingly is at one time the subject of praise, and at another, the object of pointed condemnation. Nothing in heaven or on earth is so sacred and excellent; nothing, on the other hand, so destructive and terrible in earth or hell, which the lion is not in some part

^b Bochart. Hieroz. lib. iii, cap. 4, p. 763.

of Scripture employed to symbolize. When, for example, the Most High, provoked by the wickedness of individuals or nations, visits their crimes with suitable punishments, he is compared to a lion, who, leaving his den, tears in pieces the miserable victim with irresistible fury: "For I will be as a lion unto Ephraim, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away; I will take away, and none shall rescue him."^c By such figures, the Spirit of inspiration intends to shew how tremendous are the judgments of God, and how fearful a thing it is to encounter his penal ire. We must not however imagine, that the rage and fury of that savage destroyer agitate the heart, or influence the proceedings of Deity on any occasion; infirmity and vice are equally removed from his nature and actings. He is gracious as just, merciful as righteous; nay he delights in mercy; but judgment is to him a strange work, in which, abstractly considered, he has no pleasure.

As the living God, in the character of a judge, is compared to a lion; so, the denunciations of his anger in the sacred writings, are symbolized by the roaring of that terrific animal. "Will a lion," said Amos, "roar in the forest when he hath no prey? will a young lion cry out of his den, if he have taken nothing?" It has been already observed, that the lion roars only when he comes in sight of his prey; so the Judge of all gives notice to the guilty of his approach to punish them for their iniquities, by the threatenings and terror of his law. These are not like the burst of distant thunder, which startles the hearer for a moment, but does him no harm; they are a flaming bolt from the superincumbent cloud, which is equally terrible in its explosion,

^c Hos. v, 14.

and fatal in its consequences. When the wicked persevere in their evil courses, the Judge of all the earth will not be wanting to the truth of his threatenings, but will certainly render to every one of them at last according to their works. And because the Jews accused their prophets of delighting in the denunciation of punishments, the prophet shews, that the Spirit of God, by his afflatus, constrained him to declare the fearful consequences of their sins. “The lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?” If all are struck with fear when the lion roars, how much more ought they to be moved by the command of God, whom he hath appointed ministers of his word? When the prophet Jeremiah had formed the resolution no longer to speak in the name of the Lord, he felt himself constrained, by an irresistible impulse, to the faithful discharge of his duty: “Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name: but his word was in mine heart, as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.”^d

The lion is also the symbol of our exalted Redeemer. He was a lamb in his sufferings and death, but he became “the lion of the tribe of Judah,” when he burst asunder the bands of death, forced open the grave’s devouring mouth, and returned to his Father a triumphant conqueror over all the powers of darkness. He is clothed with glorious majesty, and girt about with invincible might. No enemy can disturb the tranquillity of his fearless heart, nor interrupt the progress of his operations; no movement of providence, but he is qualified to guide; no work of judgment or mercy, but he is able to perform. “He

^d Jer. xx, 9.

speaks, and it is done ; he commands, and it stands fast - - - none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what dost thou ?” In the rapid diffusion of the gospel, and the conversion of many nations to the Christian faith, which commenced in a few days after his ascension, were fulfilled the words of Joel : “ The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem ; and the heavens and the earth shall shake, and the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.”^e Nor is the preaching of the gospel improperly compared to the roaring of a lion, for it has been heard in every part of the world, and has not only struck the ear, but by the divine energy which accompanies it has opened a way for itself into the heart, and produced a concern about salvation, which neither length of time, nor change of circumstances could subdue.

It symbolizes also the strength, the generosity, and the terrible presence of an angel ; for, in the prophecies of Ezekiel, the living creatures or cherubim, the ministers of Divine providence, had each of them four faces ; the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side ; and the face of an ox, and the face of an eagle, on the left side.^f The apostle John was favoured with a vision of the same kind in Patmos : “ In the midst of the throne and round about the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes before and behind. And the first living creature was like a lion, and the second like a calf, and the third had a face as a man, and the fourth was like a flying eagle.” In both visions, the terrible majesty of God in the ministration of angels toward the enemies of his glory, is symbolized by the lion ; their constancy, patience, firm-

^e Joel iii, 16.

^f Ezek. i, 10.

ness, and assiduity in performing the commands of their Maker, by the ox; their humanity, gentleness, and philanthropy, by the face of a man; and by the face of an eagle, the vigour, the agility, and the sublime tendencies of their celestial nature. Every one of them exhibits a high degree of excellence; the lion holds the first place among wild beasts, the eagle among the birds, an ox among the cattle, and all submit to the supreme authority of man. Of these, observes Bochart, two are wild, the lion and the eagle; two are tame, man and the ox: those to strike terror into rebels: these to impart consolation to the pious. The lion pursues his prey upon the earth, the eagle among the clouds of heaven; to shew that these angelic ministers of providence, equally control the proceedings of men that crawl upon the ground, and the more powerful and rapid movements of apostate spirits in the regions of the air.^g

It has formerly been observed that a righteous man, relying upon the favour of his God, and animated by the testimony of a good conscience, is, in the language of Solomon, bold as a lion; and to have the heart of a lion, was, in the estimation of Hushai, the friend of David, the noblest eulogy which could be pronounced on the brave. The same figures are often applied to the kings and princes of this world, to indicate the power with which they are invested, and the danger to be incurred in provoking their displeasure. “The wrath of a king is as the roaring of a lion;” and in a subsequent chapter, “the fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion; whoso provoketh him to anger, sinneth against his own soul;” that is, exposes his life to destruction: “for the wrath of a king is as messengers of death.”^h

^g Bochart. Hieroz. lib. iii, cap. 6, p. 770.

^h Prov. xix, 12, and xx, 2, and xvi, 14.

The strength and power of the Jewish nation is often described in the sacred volume by the same symbol. "Behold," cried Balaam, when from the top of Pisgah he looked down on the innumerable tents of Israel, "the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion; he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain." This prediction received its accomplishment in the signal victories which the armies of Israel, under the conduct of Joshua, obtained over the five nations of Canaan. They did not rest, till, completely victorious, they had reduced the whole country to their obedience. The forces of Joshua did not, like some uncivilized hordes in modern times, literally "eat of the prey and drink the blood of the slain," for such inhuman conduct was equally opposed to the character of their God, and the whole tenor of their law. The clause is merely a continuation of the metaphor, and a hyperbolical description of the complete conquest which, by the favour of God, awaited their arms. Such hyperbolical expressions are frequent in the sacred volume; and when viewed in the light of other Scriptures, admit of a sense equally consistent and profitable. Thus, in the reproof which the Psalmist addresses to wicked judges, he declares, "the righteous shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked;"ⁱ and in his prayer at the removing of the ark: "The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring my people again from the depths of the sea: that thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the same."^j These phrases only denote that the victory which was to crown their exertions, should be completely decisive.

Balaam adds, in the same prophecy, "He couched,

ⁱ Ps. lviii, 11. ^j Ps. lxxviii, 4.

he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion, who shall stir him up?" He was, in future times, to subdue the land of Canaan so completely, that no enemy should presume to disturb his repose; which was accomplished in the reign of David and of Solomon his son, when, by the heroic valour of the former, and the unparalleled wisdom of the latter, the whole east was awed and charmed into peace and amity.

The symbols that represented the Jewish people, were often applied to particular tribes, of which a striking instance occurs in the farewell benediction of Jacob: "Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, thou art gone up; he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?"^k And of Gad, Moses said, "Blessed by he that enlargeth Gad; he dwelleth as a lion, and teareth the arm with the crown of the head."^l

But the sacred writers often allude to the savage disposition of the lion; and in all these instances the name is used in a bad sense. Thus, the great adversary of mankind is compared to a roaring lion that walketh about seeking whom he may devour.^m Furious and cruel as the lion when within a single leap of his prey, he thirsts for the destruction of poor mortals, as intensely as that famished destroyer for the blood of the slain, and exerts still greater and more unwearied activity to accomplish his purpose. The name which is imposed upon the arch fiend, is, with much propriety, assigned to the wicked, the victims and instruments of his cruelty and injustice. "The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the fierce lion, and the teeth of the young lions are broken." That the

^k Gen. xlix, 9.

^l Deut. xxxiii, 20, 22.

^m 1 Pet. v, 8.

wicked are intended in this passage, is evident from the context: "Even as I have seen, they that plough iniquity and sow wickedness, reap the same. By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed."ⁿ It is used in the same sense by the prophet, where he describes the flourishing state of Christ's kingdom: "No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there."^o These are only a few of the numerous instances in which the sacred writers use the name to express the temper and conduct of wicked men. Not only the vicious and profane, the cruel and the unjust in the private walks of life, but also the sceptered oppressor, the blood-stained conqueror, the warlike nation, are stigmatized in the holy Scriptures, and held up to the execration of all mankind, under this odious name. "Their roaring shall be like a lion, they shall roar like young lions: yea, they shall roar and lay hold of the prey, and shall carry it away safe, and none shall deliver it."^p But the name is not confined to the human character, it is extended also to every thing hurtful or destructive to mankind. The sword, for example, is by the prophet compared to the lion, on account of the desolations which it is the means of accomplishing: "Your own sword hath devoured your prophets like a destroying lion."^q If these statements have not removed any of the difficulties which the biblical student meets with in his progress, they prove at least, beyond a doubt, the closeness and accuracy with which the sacred writers copy nature, and the admirable fitness and propriety of their al-

ⁿ Job iv, 8, 9, 10.

^o Isa. xxxv, 9.

^p Isa. v, 29.

^q Jer. ii, 30.

lusions; and this is no insignificant service to the interests of religion.

The Leopard.

This powerful and ferocious animal is entitled to the second place among the beasts of prey. In the sacred volume, the lion and the leopard are frequently united as if they were homogeneous animals. Thus in the Song, the spouse is invited to “look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lion’s dens, from the mountains of the leopards.” The prophet Jeremiah directs the combined force of the lion, the wolf, and the leopard against the cities of his corrupt and impenitent countrymen.^r A similiar denunciation is pronounced by Hosea against the ten tribes: “Therefore I will be unto them as a lion; as a leopard by the way will I observe them.” They are associated in the same manner in the lines of Homer:

Οὐτ' ἐν παρδαλίοις τόσσον μένος, ὥτ' ἐν λεοντοῖς. *Il. lib. xvii, l. 20.*

“Neither the leopard nor the lion possesses so great strength.”

“The leopard,” says the natural historian, “is rather less than a mastiff dog, which, in form, he greatly resembles; he has a ferocious air, a restless eye, a cruel aspect; he is very nimble in his movements, and has a cry similar to that of an enraged dog, but stronger and more hoarse; he has a tongue equally rough as the lion’s; strong and pointed teeth, hard sharp claws, a beautiful skin of a more or less deep colour, variegated with black circular spots, but subject to greater variety than the panther.”^s

^r Jer. v, 6.

^s Buffon’s Nat. Hist. vol. v, p. 178. Plin. Hist. Nat. lib. viii, cap. 17.

Bochart. Hieroz. lib. iii, cap. 7, p. 785.

To this last feature, the prophet Jeremiah beautifully alludes, in stating the invincible power which a vicious habit acquires over the human mind; “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil.”^t

This terrible animal delights in the thick and gloomy forest, and chooses his abode in its deepest recesses; but he often frequents the banks of rivers, and the environs of sequestered habitations, where he endeavours to surprise domestic animals, and the wild beasts which come to the river in quest of water. He seldom attacks men, even when provoked: he climbs trees with great facility in pursuit of his prey, which seldom escapes him. He is exceedingly swift and subtile, rapacious and gluttonous; and his fiery restless eyes are continually rolling in search of blood.^u The prophet Habakkuk, describing the march of the Chaldees against Jerusalem, alludes to the extraordinary swiftness of this animal in these words: “Their horses also are swifter than leopards.” This agrees exactly with the character given him by Homer (*παραλίσταροι*), “the swift leopards;” and with the testimony of Pliny and Ælian,^v that the leopard pursues the other animals with great swiftness. Eustathius asserts, that he excels all other animals in swiftness, and as it were, flies before the eyes of the hunters.^w

But he does not trust for success to his swiftness alone; Buffon remarks, that he often conceals himself among the

^t Jer. xiii, 23.

^u Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. v, p. 185.

^v Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. viii, cap. 25, sec. 18. Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. 14.

^w Bochart. Hieroz. lib. iii, cap. 7, p. 788. Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. viii, cap. 6. Oppiani libro tertio; “You would say, when you see him, that he is carried on the wings of the wind.”

thick branches of a tree, and from thence darts down upon the passing victim.^x This allusion is involved in the threatening: "As a leopard by the way will I observe them."^y So wakeful are the eyes of Jehovah, so keen is his inspection, and equally sudden and irresistible as the downward spring of the watchful leopard, is the vengeance which he inflicts upon his enemies. The allusion to the insidious habit and ferocious character of this creature, is still more striking in the denunciation of Jeremiah: "A leopard shall watch over their cities; every one that goeth out thence shall be torn in pieces." For what purpose Jehovah threatened to watch over their cities, is explained in the next clause, and is admirably illustrated in another passage of his book: "I have watched over them to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict."^z A similar expression occurs in the prophecies of Daniel: "Therefore, hath the Lord watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us."^a

Homer says, that the leopard never can be satiated with prey; and many unexceptionable witnesses declare, that the ferocity of his disposition cannot, by the most assiduous and artful management, be wholly subdued.^b How great then must be the change produced in his truculent heart, when, according to ancient prophecy, he "shall lie down with the kid;" but still more singular is the alteration which the gospel of peace, under the salutary influence of the divine Spirit, effects in the moral and religious feelings of mankind. This great and desirable event, which has been partly realized already, but is yet

^x Nat. Hist. vol. v, p. 183. Plin. Hist. Natur. lib. x, cap. 73.

^y Hos. xiii, 7.

^z Jer. v, 6, and xxxi, 28.

^a Dan. ix, 14,

^b Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. v, p. 180, 181.

in a great degree matter of hope, is represented by the prophet Isaiah, with his usual felicity of expression, under the striking figure of a general and cordial pacification among all the beasts of the field. “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

The Grecian monarchy, under Alexander of Macedon and his successors, the rise and fall of which, Daniel beheld in vision, was represented by a leopard; and surely, a more appropriate symbol to indicate the insatiable ambition of Alexander, the vigour of his counsels, the rapidity of his movements, the impetuosity of his onset, and the number and variety of the nations that fought under his banner,—numerous and diversified as the spots on the skin of that animal,—can scarcely be devised.^c

The leopard is of a nature so fierce and untractable, that man may be said rather to subdue, than to tame him; he never loses entirely his ferocious disposition. To train him for the chase, which has been frequently done in the east, great attention is necessary, and still greater caution in conducting and exercising him. He is carried to the field in a cart, shut up in a cage, the door of which is opened when game appears. Starting from his den, he springs toward the animal, and generally at three or four bounds seizes and strangles it. But if he miss his aim, he becomes furious, and sometimes attacks his master, who commonly prevents this hazard by carrying along with him pieces of flesh or live animals, as lambs or kids, one of which he throws to him to pacify his rage.^d Demarchais

^c Bochart. Hieroz. lib. iii, cap. 7, p. 789.

^d Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. v, p. 181.

asserts, that the Guinea leopard is incapable of being tamed ; but a higher authority says, that every kind of animal may be tamed, and has been tamed by man ; and, therefore, the leopard of Guinea might be subdued, if sufficient time and pains were bestowed in the training. How admirable then is the power of the gospel, which subdues, tames, and humanizes the heart of a wicked man, who is equally stubborn, cruel, and untractable as the leopard ; which eradicates the very principles of deceit and violence ; chains the furious passions, and purifies the unholy affections and grovelling appetites, and renders him gentle, moderate, humble, and inoffensive. Such are the happy effects, which ancient prophets and holy apostles ascribe to the influence of religion upon the human heart.

This formidable animal loves to roam on the summits of lofty mountains, where he remains in gloomy solitude, till hunger compel him to leave his retreat, and descend into the plain. Solomon alludes to this habit in the Song, where, under the significant emblem of lions and leopards, he describes the men of this world, who, for the degraded state of their nature ; for their devouring and insatiable desires, which, like the voracious appetites of the leopard, are never satisfied ; and for their malicious dispositions, which stimulate them to plot against the peace and safety of righteous and holy men,—are with great propriety represented by these devourers. Environed by the men of this world, the church of Christ is in no less danger than a solitary inhabitant of the wood, or the mountain, where the lion and the leopard range in quest of their prey. She is, therefore, invited to leave such dangerous solitudes, and take up her residence upon mount Zion, which no ravenous beast was allowed to approach, and to place her

happiness in the presence and fellowship of her God :
 “ Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from
 Lebanon ; look from the top of Amana, from the top of
 Shenir and Hermon, from the lion’s dens, from the moun-
 tains of leopards.”

The Bear.

The bear is occasionally found in company with the lion in the writings of the Old Testament ; and if the savage ferocity of his disposition be duly considered, certainly forms a proper associate for that destroyer.^e “ There came a lion and a bear,” said the son of Jesse, “ and took a lamb out of the flock ;” and Solomon unites them, to constitute the symbol of a wicked magistrate : “ As a roaring lion, and a ranging bear, so is a wicked ruler over the poor people.”^f The savage, which in these texts is associated with the lion, is the brown or red bear. Natural historians mention two other species, the white and black, the dispositions and habits of which are entirely different. The white bear differs in shape from the others, is an inhabitant of the polar regions, and feeds “ on the bodies of seals, whales, and other monsters of the deep.” It is properly a sea bear, and must have been totally unknown to the inspired writers, who lived so far remote from those dreary and desolate shores which it frequents. The black and the brown bears are considered by many as only varieties of the same species ; but their temper and manners are so different, that Buffon, and other respectable writers, contend, that they ought to be regarded as specifically different. The brown or red bear is both a larger animal than the black, and a beast of prey that in strength and ferocity scarcely yields to the lion himself ; while the black

^e Bochart. Hieroz. lib. iii, p. 806.

^f Prov. xxviii, 15.

bear chiefly subsists on roots, fruits, and vegetables, and is never known to prey upon other animals. This species uniformly flies from the presence of men, and never attacks them but in self-defence; but the red bear is a bold and extremely mischievous animal, which will attack a man with equal indifference as a lamb or a fawn. The black bear also confines himself to the more temperate northern latitudes, never ascending to the arctic circle, nor descending lower than the Alps, where it is sometimes found; but the brown bear accommodates himself to every clime, and is to be found in every desert or uncultivated country on the face of our globe. He ranges the Scythian wilds as far as the shores of the frozen ocean; he infests the boundless forests of America; he traverses the burning wastes of Lybia and Numidia, countries of Africa which supplied the ancient Romans with bears to be exhibited at their public spectacles; he prowls on the glowing sands of Arabia; he lounges on the banks of the Nile,^g and on the shores of the Red sea; he inhabits the wilderness adjoining to the Holy land.^h Hence, the black bear must have been unknown to the inhabitants of Canaan; while the red bear infested their country, prowled around their flocks, and watched near their dwellings, affording them but too many opportunities of studying his character, and too much reason to remember his manners.

A particular description of this animal is to be found in every work on natural history; our concern is only with those traits in his character, which serve to illustrate the sacred writings. His external appearance is unusually rugged and savage; his limbs are strong and thick; his fore-feet somewhat resemble the human hand; his hair

^g Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. v, p. 1, &c.

^h Thevenot's Trav.

is shaggy and coarse, and his whole aspect dull and heavy. His motions are as awkward as his shape is clumsy ; but under this forbidding exterior, he conceals a considerable degree of alertness and cunning. If hunger compel him to attack a man, or one of the larger animals, he watches the moment when his adversary is off his guard. In pursuit of his prey, he swims with ease the broad and rapid stream, and climbs the highest tree in the forest. Many beasts of prey surpass him in running ; yet his speed is so great, that a man on foot can seldom escape. Hence, the danger to which a person is exposed from his pursuit, is extreme ; he can scarcely hope to save himself by flight ; the interposing river can give him no security ; and the loftiest tree in the forest is commonly the chosen dwelling of his pursuer, which, so far from affording him a safe retreat, only insures his destruction. The danger of the victim, which the bear has marked for destruction, is increased by his natural sagacity, the keenness of his eye, and the excellency of his other senses, particularly his sense of smelling, which Buffon conjectures from the peculiar structure of the organ, to be perhaps more exquisite than that of any other animal. Nor can any hope be rationally entertained from the forbearance or generosity of his temper ; to these, or any other amiable quality, his rugged and savage heart is an entire stranger. His anger, which is easily excited, is at once capricious and intense. A dark and sullen scowl, which, on his forbidding countenance never relaxes into a look of satisfaction, indicates the settled moroseness of his disposition ; and his voice, which is a deep murmur, or rather growl, often accompanied with a grinding of the teeth, betrays the discontent which reigns within. It is therefore with jus-

tice, that the inspired writers uniformly number him among the most ferocious and dangerous tenants of the forest, and associate his name and manners, with the sorest judgments which afflict mankind.

The peculiar form of his anterior feet, was remarked by David in his address to Saul: "The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw, or hand, of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." The original term, it must be admitted, is of very general import; but in its application to the bear, ought to be literally interpreted, because the fore-foot of the bear somewhat resembles the human hand, and is often used as a hand by that animal. When he finds fruit which he relishes, he climbs the tree, sits astride on a branch, with one hand keeps himself firm, and with the other collects the fruit. The paw of the bear, is distinguished by terms which have the same meaning, in the most celebrated writings of Greece and Rome; Aristotle says, the feet of a bear resemble hands;ⁱ and Oppian, the hands of a bear resemble the hands of a man, and his feet the feet of a man;

Χειρας χειρσι βρωτων κελαι, ποδες ηδε ποδεσσι.^j

Ælian observes, that he remains without meat or drink forty days, and it suffices him in the mean time (την αυτης δεξιαν περιλιχμασθαι) to lick his right hand.^k Ovid, in his *Metamorphoses*, and Pliny in his *Natural History*, style it *Manus*, a hand.^l Thus, to the strength and ferocity of the lion and the leopard, he adds the important faculty of seizing the prey with his hand, and rendering escape more difficult.

ⁱ Hist. lib. ii, cap. 1.

^k De Nat. Animal. lib. vi, cap. 3.

^j Lib. iii, l. 144, 174.

^l Lib. viii, cap. 54.

The sacred writer also alludes to the grumbling mournful sound of his voice, when he introduces the ancient church as dissatisfied with herself for her wickedness, and deploring the wretched state to which it had reduced her: "We roar," or rather, as Lowth translates it, we groan, all "like bears, and mourn sore like doves; we look for judgment, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far from us."^m In ages long posterior, Horace celebrates in these lines the mournful tones of the bear:

"Nec vespertinus circumgemit ursus ovile." *Epod.* 16.

But he is more inclined to rage than to complain. It is, according to Virgil, his characteristic temper.ⁿ The fretful and discontented temper of the bear, when roused by hunger, or irritated by danger, often breaks out into the most violent rage, under the impulse of which he makes terrible havock among the flocks and herds, and resolutely attacks the keepers themselves. At such a time to encounter his fury, is almost to rush upon certain destruction.

—— "rabido nec perditus ore
Fumantem nasum vivi tentaveris ursi." *Martial.*

Naturally intrepid, or at least indifferent to danger, he is then extremely formidable. To flee from a ravenous lion, therefore, and meet a ranging bear, is to escape from one danger, only to encounter another equally great. "Hence, the prophet Amos, who was bred a herdsman, and must have been well acquainted with the dangers to be apprehended from this strong and furious animal, uses this as a proverbial expression, not only of the succession of calamities with which the ungodly Israelites were to be

^m Isa. lix, 11.

ⁿ — "atque in præsepibus ursi sævire." *Æneid.* lib. xvii, l. 17.

afflicted, but also to intimate, that the removal of one evil, instead of bettering their circumstances, would only be making way for the approach of another as bad: "Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord;" that you may know the worst you have to suffer, or as if the threatened evil will never be inflicted; 'to what end is it for you? The day of the Lord is darkness, and not light.' The calamity will neither be so slight, nor so transient, as ye presumptuously imagine, but a succession of calamities, all of them grievous, and of which you will be unable to discover any termination: Your case will be, as if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him."^o

The manner in which the bear combats his enemy, is peculiar to himself. While the lion springs upon the victim with a tremendous roar, strikes him down with his paw, and tears him in pieces with his claws and teeth; the bear steals upon his prey in silence, and having reached him, rises upon his hind legs, opens his thick and shaggy arms, and crushes him to death in his horrid embrace.

—— "sic hispida turpes
Prælia villosis ineunt complexibus ursi."^p

How few have the presense of mind to resist, or the strength to extricate themselves from so great a danger! The name of only one heroic youth is recorded in Scripture, who, by the favour of Jehovah, vanquished in such close combat that powerful and ruthless enemy. When David kept his father's sheep, there came a bear and took a lamb out of the flock; and he went out after him and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth. And when, according to his custom, the enraged savage raised him-

^o Sacred Zoology, Christ. Mag. vol. vi, p. 573.

^p Statius, lib. vi, Theb.

self against him to give him the fatal embrace, the dauntless stripling, relying on the protection of his God, and exerting his own uncommon strength, caught him by the chin, "and smote him, and slew him." In this incident, we discover no trace of miraculous power; but the manner in which David afterward spoke of it, clearly shews, that such escapes were very rare, and at no time to be expected but from the Divine interposition. "The Lord delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear."

The bear is not more ferocious than cunning and deceitful.^a He lies in ambush under the thicket, or in the skirts of the forest, to seize the unwary passenger; he watches the favourable moment of attack, when the intended victim is off his guard; and steals in silence upon him. If his approach is discovered, and a stout resistance threatened, he retires to his covert, frequently looking back, as if expecting to be pursued.^r To this artful management, the prophet evidently refers, in his complaint of the suddenness and severity of divine judgments: "He was unto me as a bear lying in wait, and as a lion in secret places."^s The wrath of Jehovah came suddenly and unexpectedly on his country and himself, and with great rapidity and violence, like a bear, that rushing from the forest, in a moment surprises and overpowers the unsuspecting prey.

But he acts this wary part only at certain seasons of the year, when he is permitted to range at large, or in those places where game is plenty. When he first goes abroad, after the dreadful rigours of a polar winter, du-

^a Plin. Hist. Natur. lib. viii, cap. 36.

^r Lewis and Clarke's Trav. vol. i, p. 362.

^s Lam. iii, 10.

ring which he has been compelled to subsist, as Buffon admits, by sucking his paws, or where the deserts afford him but a scanty supply of food, he attacks his prey with open violence, and terrible rage. Fierce and savage, in proportion to the craving of his voracious appetite, he forsakes his usual haunts, and boldly attacks not only the flocks but the herds also, not sparing the bulls themselves,^t and pursuing the natives by their scent, frequently comes upon them unawares, and sacrifices them to his fierceness and hunger.^u But he does not always put them instantly to death; he frequently makes them undergo the most dilatory torments, macerating the bones of some, while the skin remains almost unbroken, and sucking away the flesh of others into long fibrous remnants.^v Equally dangerous is the cruel oppressor to those that are exposed to his depredations: "As a roaring lion and a ranging bear, so is a wicked ruler over the poor people."^w A more formidable enemy never disturbs their habitations; no sentiment of pity and compassion softens his bosom; no principle of justice and equity regulates or influences his conduct; complaint only provokes him to further exactions; resistance kindles his fierce and unfeeling heart into savage fury, which no supplications can mitigate, no submissions appease. Poor and miserable indeed are the people whom the anger of heaven has placed under his government, rather subjected to his misrule, and bent under his unsupportable oppressions! If the vigour of their own arm, supported by the justice of their cause, is insufficient to procure them relief and safety, they have

^t Ælian. Hist. lib. vi, c. 9.

^u Cook's Voy. vol. iii, p. 305, 4to.

^v Forbes's Orient. Mem. vol. ii, p. 287, 288.

^w Prov. xxviii, 15. Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. v, p. 7.

no resource but in the special favour of heaven, no refuge but in the darkness and silence of the grave.

Still more fierce and terrible than the male, is the female bear, after she has brought forth her young. Animated by the tenderest attachment to her cubs, and extremely jealous for their safety, she suffers neither man nor beast to disturb their repose.^x This important circumstance, the prophet Isaiah has introduced, with admirable skill and propriety, into the striking picture he has given of the change produced in the most savage and ungovernable hearts by the gospel, and of the peace and concord which shall prevail over all the world under the reign of Messiah. “The cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together.” The most ferocious animals, laying aside their native fierceness and cruelty, shall associate in peace with those gentle defenceless creatures on which they were accustomed to prey. The bear shall offer no violence, meditate no mischief, to the cow; and the cow shall entertain no suspicion of the temper or designs of the bear. Even maternal fear and jealousy shall cease to alarm or enrage; the cow shall see, without concern, her young one reposing with the cubs of the bear; and this outrageous animal, softened into forbearance and kindness, permitting the calf in peace and safety, to gambol around her thicket, or lie down with her cubs. Such is the wonderful change which holy prophets and apostles have promised in the name of the Lord, to the church and the world, when his gospel shall be preached to all nations, and his Spirit shall be poured upon all flesh. The blissful event ap-

^x Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. v, p. 8.

proaches rapidly, and, it is to be hoped, shall ere long fully reward "the faith and patience of the saints."

But the furious passions of the female bear never mount so high, nor burn so fiercely, as when she happens to be deprived of her young. When she returns to her den, and misses the objects of her love and care, she becomes almost frantic with rage. Disregarding every consideration of danger to herself, she attacks, with intense ferocity, every animal that comes in her way, "and in the bitterness of her heart, will dare to attack even a band of armed men." The Russians of Kamtchatka never venture to fire on a young bear when the mother is near; for, if the cub drop, she becomes enraged to a degree little short of madness; and if she get sight of the enemy, will only quit her revenge with her life."^y "A more desperate attempt, therefore, can scarcely be performed, than to carry off her young in her absence. The moment she returns, and misses them, her passions are inflamed; her scent enables her to track the plunderer; and unless he has reached some place of safety before the infuriated animal overtake him, his only safety is in dropping one of the cubs, and continuing to flee; for the mother, attentive to its safety, carries it home to her den, before she renews the pursuit."^z

These statements furnish an admirable illustration of a passage in the counsel of Hushai to Absalom, in which he represents the danger of attacking David and his followers with so small a force as twelve thousand chosen men, when their tried courage was inflamed, and their spirits were embittered by the variety and severity of their sufferings, and when their caution, matured by long and

^y Cook's Voyages, vol. iii, p. 306.

^z Sacred Zoology, Christ. Mag. vol. vi, p. 379.

extensive experience in the art of war, and sharpened by the novelty and peril of their circumstances, would certainly lead them to anticipate, and take measures to defeat the attempt. "Hushai said unto Absalom, The counsel that Ahitophel hath given, is not good at this time; for (said Hushai) thou knowest thy father and his men, that they be mighty men, and they be chafed in their minds as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field."^a The frantic rage of the female bear, when she has lost her young, gives wonderful energy to the proverb of Solomon: "Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man, rather than a fool in his folly."^b Dreadful as it is to meet a bear in such circumstances, it is yet more dangerous to meet "a fool in his folly," a furious and revengeful man, under the influence of his impetuous passions, and his heart determined on their immediate gratification. Naturally stubborn and cruel as the bear, and equally devoted to his lusts as she is to her young, he pursues them with equal fury and eagerness. It is possible to escape the vengeance of a bereaved bear, by surrendering part of the litter, and diverting her pursuit; but no considerations of interest or duty, no partial gratifications, can arrest his furious career or divert his attention. Reason, degraded and enslaved, lends all her remaining wisdom and energy to passion, and renders the fool more cruel and mischievous than the bear, in proportion as she is superior to instinct. When the prophet Hosea foretold the dreadful calamities that were coming upon the ten tribes for their inveterate and diversified wickedness, he alludes to the same facts: "I will meet them as a bear that is bereaved of her whelps, and will rent the caul of

^a 2 Sam. xvii, 7, 8.^b Prov. xvii, 12.

their heart.”^c Provoked by their numerous and aggravated iniquities, I will pour out upon them the fierceness of my wrath, till as a nation they are utterly destroyed. And none of his words were suffered to fall to the ground: Not long after, the armies of Assyria invaded the country, and carried the miserable inhabitants that remained from the sword, into a long and painful captivity.

Some writers contend, that the allusion in these texts, is not to the female bear, but to the male; because the words, *of her whelps*, are a supplement; and consequently a literal translation would run, I will meet them as a bear bereaved; and because both the noun and its adjective are in the masculine form, and as the male bear is not known to have any remarkable attachment to his young, they explain it of the he-bear when bereaved of the female. It must be admitted, that the bear, like many other animals, is more fierce and dangerous in the rutting season than at other times; but this is not a sufficient reason to deviate from the common interpretation, which is by far the most emphatical and significant. In that season, the bear is not more dangerous than the lion or the tiger; why then is he selected, for that the inspired writer alludes to him designedly and emphatically, cannot be doubted? But, if the Spirit of God allude to the female bear, the reason of the preference is obvious; her fierceness and rage, when deprived of her cubs, scarcely admit of comparison with the passions of the lioness, or any other beast of prey.

The argument drawn from the form of the noun, is of no force, for the original term, although in the masculine form, is of the common gender. It is accordingly connected at one time with the masculine, and at another with

^c Hos. xiii, 8.

the feminine form of the verb. An instance of its connection with the feminine form, and by consequence, of its reference to the female bear, occurs in the passage of Scripture which mentions the destruction of the children of Bethel by two bears.^d It may perhaps be replied, that the masculine form of the adjective determines the gender and meaning of the substantive; but this is not always the case in Hebrew. It has been justly observed, that the adjective “bereaved, may be expressed in the masculine form, in conformity to the termination of the noun with which it is connected, rather than to indicate the sex of the animal.” But a more satisfactory reason may perhaps be assigned: The Hebrews often connect a masculine verb or adjective with a feminine noun, when they mean to indicate something peculiarly excellent, or to increase the force and significancy of the clause, and the reverse; the adjective here may therefore be put in the masculine form, to signify the total loss which the bear had suffered, and by consequence, that she was wrought up to the highest paroxysm of rage and madness. In the same manner would Jehovah, provoked in the highest degree by the total apostacy of the ten tribes to the service of dumb idols, meet them in the severest calamities which his righteous indignation inflicts upon a guilty and impenitent people.

We have not perhaps in the records of history, a more terrible illustration of the dreadful ferocity which marks the character of the she-bear, than was exhibited in the neighbourhood of Bethel. The prophet Elisha, we are told, after the ascension of his master into heaven, and having received a double portion of his spirit, was returning from Jericho to that place. “And as he was going

^d 2 Kings ii, 23, 34.

up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head, go up, thou bald head. And he turned back, and cursed them in the name of the Lord; and there came forth two she-bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them."

These furious animals were she-bears, which, it is probable, had been just deprived of their young; and now following the impulse of their outraged feelings, they rushed from the wood to revenge the loss. But it is evident their native ferocity was overruled and directed by divine providence, to execute the dreadful sentence pronounced by the prophet in his name. They must, therefore, be considered as the ministers of God, the Judge of all the earth, commissioned to punish the idolatrous inhabitants of Bethel and their profligate offspring, who probably acted on this occasion with their concurrence, if not by their command. He punished in a similar way the Heathen colonies planted by the king of Assyria in the cities of Samaria, after the expulsion of the ten tribes: "They feared not the Lord; therefore the Lord sent lions among them, which slew some of them."^e When he punished the youths of Bethel (for so the phrase *little children* signifies in Hebrew), by directing against them the rage of the she-bears, he only did what Moses had long before predicted, and left on record for their warning: "And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me, I will bring seven times more plagues upon you, according to your sins. I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children."^f Bethel had been long a principal seat of idolatry, and its attendant vices; and to all their ag-

^e 2 Kings xvii, 25.

^f Lev. xxvi, 21, 22.

gravated crimes, its inhabitants now added rude and impious mockery of a person whom they knew to be a prophet of the Lord, reviling with blasphemous tongues, the Lord God of Elijah, and his now glorified servant. Baldness was reckoned a very great deformity in the east; and to be reproached with it, one of the grossest insults an oriental could receive. Cæsar, who was bald, could not bear to hear it mentioned in jest.^g It is one of the marks of disgrace which Homer fixes upon Thersites, that he had only a few straggling hairs on his pyramidal head.^h Their crime, therefore, justly merited the severest punishment.ⁱ

The only other passage of Scripture which takes notice of the bear, occurs in the book of Daniel: "And behold, another beast, a second like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it, between the teeth of it; and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh."^j It has been satisfactorily proved by the best writers on the subject, that the vision refers to the four great monarchies, the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Macedonian or Grecian, and the Roman; and that the second beast, which was like to a bear, symbolizes the empire of the Medes and Persians. All the four monarchies are represented by beasts of prey, to intimate their agreement in the general character of fierceness and rapacity; and by beasts of different species, to intimate the existence of important differences in their character and mode of operation. The Babylonish empire is

^g Sueton. in Jul. cap. 45.

^h Iliad, lib. ii, l. 219.

ⁱ See an excellent reply to the cavils of unbelievers against the prophet and his God, in the Christ. Mag. Sac. Zool. vol. vi, p. 415.

^j Dan. vii, 5.

symbolized by a lion with eagle's wings, because it was the first and noblest kingdom upon earth ; it was strong and fierce as a lion ; it was swift and rapid in its movements, as a lion with eagle's wings ; rising in a few years, under the conduct of Nebuchadnezzar, to the highest pinnacle of power and greatness. The third kingdom is represented by another beast, " like a leopard which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl ; the beast had also four heads ; and dominion was given unto it." This is the Grecian monarchy ; the distinguishing characters of which, are great variety of disposition and manners, undaunted boldness, and rapidity of conquest, never before or since exemplified in the history of nations. The fourth beast was so great and horrible, that no adequate name could be found for it ; this nondescript was the symbol of the Roman empire, which differed from all others in the form of its government, in strength, in power, in greatness, in length of duration, and in extent of dominion. The Persian monarchy, symbolized by the bear, has also certain specific differences, which are to be learned from the natural history of that animal. Cruel and rapacious as the others, the bear is inferior in strength and courage to the lion, and although slower in its motions, more uniform in its appearance and steady in its purpose, than the leopard. Such was the empire of the Medes and Persians : weaker and less warlike than the Babylonian, whose symbol is the lion ; but less various in its principles of government, in the forms which it assumed, in the customs and manners of the nations which composed it, and less rapid in its conquests, than the Macedonian, symbolized by the spotted leopard, one of the most rapid and impetuous animals that traverse the desert.

But if the bear is inferior to the lion and the leopard, in strength, in courage, and in swiftness, it surpasses them in ferocious cruelty and insatiable voracity ; it thirsts for blood and riots in carnage ; and such was the empire of the Medes and Persians. They are stigmatized by ancient historians, as the greatest robbers and spoilers that ever oppressed the nations. The symbol of this all devouring people, is accordingly represented as having “ three ribs in the mouth of it, between the teeth of it,” in the very act of devouring three weaker animals which it had seized, that is, of oppressing the kingdoms of Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt, which it conquered. And besides, to denote its rapaciousness and cruelty, it is added in the vision, that “ they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.”

The fourth empire is symbolized by “ a dreadful and terrible beast,” for which, the prophet found no name in the kingdom of nature. It resembled the fabulous monsters, which poetic imagination sometimes delights to portray ; for, in the book of Revelation, John describes it as compounded of the three which preceded it : “ The beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion.”^k It possessed all the qualities which render beasts of prey a terror to man and other animals ; the swiftness and cunning of the leopard, the ferocity of the bear, and the boldness and strength of the lion. The Roman empire which it symbolized, resembled no state of society known among men ; it displayed, in its character and proceedings, the vigour and courage of the Babylonians, the various policy and alacrity of the Greeks, and the unchanging firmness

^k Rev. xiii, 2. Bochart. Hieroz. lib. iii, p. 820.

of the Medes and Persians; qualities which have been equally conspicuous in the Papal state of that empire.

The Wolf.

This animal is not often alluded to by the sacred writers; but in the few references which occur, his character is strongly and justly drawn. Nature has furnished him with cunning, strength, and agility, to discover, to seize, and to devour his prey. Though naturally clownish and dastardly, want makes him ingenious, and necessity gives him courage. Hence the frequent remark of the poets, that the wolf chooses to prowl in the night:

“ Non lupus insidias explorat ovilia circum,
Nec gregibus nocturnus obambulat. Acrior illum
Cura domat.” *Geor. lib. iii, l. 537.*

When pressed with famine, he braves danger; he attacks those animals which are under the protection of man, especially those which he can transport with ease, as lambs, small dogs, and kids; and when successful in his bloody expeditions, he returns often to the charge, till the vigorous opposition of men and dogs force him to his den.^m The dying patriarch, Jacob, ascribed to his youngest son, the rapacity of this animal: “ Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.”ⁿ The wolf is weaker than the lion or the bear, and less courageous than the leopard; but he scarcely yields to them in cruelty and rapaciousness. So Benjamin, although not destitute of courage and address, nor disinclined to war, possessed neither the strength, nor the manly spirit of Judah, whose symbol was the lion’s whelp; but yet he was greedy of blood, he delighted in rapine, and in the early periods of Jewish history, he dis-

^m Buffon’s Nat. Hist. vol. iv, p. 197.

ⁿ Gen. xlix, 27.

tinguished himself by an active and restless spirit, which commonly, like the wolf among lambs and kids, spent itself in petty or inglorious warfare, although it sometimes blazed forth in deeds of heroic valour, and general utility. He had the honour of giving the second judge to the nation of Israel, who delivered them from the oppressive yoke of Moab; and the first king who sat on the throne of that chosen people, whose valour saved them from the iron sceptre of Ammon, and more than once revenged the barbarities of the uncircumcised Philistines upon their discomfited hosts. In the decline of the Jewish commonwealth, Esther and Mordecai, who were both of this tribe, successfully interposed with the king of Persia, for the deliverance of their brethren, and took their station in the first rank of public benefactors. But the tribe of Benjamin ravened like wolves, that are so ferocious as to devour one another,^o when they desperately espoused the cause of Gibeah, and in the dishonourable and bloody feud, reduced their own tribe to the very brink of ruin, and inflicted a deep wound on the other members of the state.

The rapacious character of the wolf was familiarly known to the ancients, for both the Greek and Latin poets frequently mention it. In the first book of the Georgics, Virgil says, this office was given to the wolf by Jupiter, to hunt the prey:

“Prædæ lupos jussit.” l. 130.

The rapacious wolf, is a phrase which often occurs in the odes of Horace:

“Cervi luporum præda rapacium.” Lib. iv, Ode 4.

And Ovid, in one of his Elegies, sings, how the wolf, ra-

^o Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. vii, cap. 20.

pacious and greedy of blood, when pressed by famine, plunders the unguarded fold:

“ Utque rapax, stimulante fame cupidusque cruoris
Incustoditum captat ovile lupus.” 5 *El. lib. i.*

His ravenous temper prompts him to destructive and sanguinary depredations. He issues forth in the night, traverses the country, and not only kills what is sufficient to satisfy his hunger, but, every where, unless deterred by the barking of dogs or the vociferation of the shepherds, destroys a whole flock; he roams about the cottages, kills all the animals which have been left without, digs the earth under the doors, enters with a dreadful ferocity, and puts every living creature to death, before he chooses to depart, and carry off his prey. When these inroads happen to be fruitless, he returns to the woods, searches about with avidity, follows the tract of wild beasts, and pursues them in the hope that they may be stopped and seized by some other wolf, and that he may be a partaker of the spoil. “ To appease hunger,” says Buffon, “ he swallows indiscriminately every thing he can find, corrupted flesh, bones, hair, skins half tanned and covered with lime;” and Pliny avers, that he devours the earth on which he treads, to satisfy his voracious appetite.^p When his hunger is extreme, he loses the idea of fear; he attacks women and children, and even sometimes darts upon men;^q till, becoming perfectly furious by excessive exertions, he generally falls a sacrifice to pure rage and distraction. He has been accordingly joined with the lion in executing punishment upon wicked men; and it is evident from his cha-

^p Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. iv, p. 209. Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. viii, cap. 34.

^q Forbes's Orient. Mem. vol. iv, p. 81. See also Bochart. Hieroz. lib. iii, cap. 10, p. 822.

racter and habits, that he is well adapted to the work of judgment : “ The great men,” said Jeremiah, “ have altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds ; wherefore a lion out of the forest shall slay them, and a wolf of the evenings shall spoil them.”^r The rapacious and cruel conduct of the princes of Israel, is compared by Ezekiel to the mischievous inroads of the same animal : “ Her princes in the midst thereof, are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain.”^s The disposition of the wolf to attack the weaker animals, especially those which are under the protection of man, is alluded to by our Lord in the parable of the hireling shepherd : “ The wolf catches them and scatters the flock ;”^t and the apostle Paul, in his address to the elders of Ephesus, gives the name of this insidious and cruel animal, to the false teachers who disturbed the peace, and perverted the faith of their people : “ I know this, that after my departing, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.”^u Ovid gives him the same character in his fable of Lycaon :

——— “ solitæque cupidine cædis
Utitur in pecudes, et nunc quoque sanguine gaudet.”

Met. lib. 1, Fab. 6.

The Jewish rulers, in the time of the prophet Zephaniah, manifested the same disposition, and were branded with the same stigma : “ Her princes within her are roaring lions, her judges are evening wolves ; they gnaw not the bones till the morrow.”^v Instead of protecting the innocent, and restraining the evil doer, or punishing him according to the demerit of his crimes, they delight in

^r Jer. v, 6.

^s Ezek. xxii, 27.

^t Mat. vii, 15.

^u Acts xx, 29.

^v Zeph. iii, 3.

violence and oppression, in blood and rapine, and so insatiable is their cupidity, that, like the evening wolf, they destroy more than they are able to possess; “they gnaw not the bones till the morrow;” or, so much do they delight in carnage, that they reserve the bones till next day for a sweet repast. The insatiable cupidity of this animal, has not escaped the observation of classic authors. Ovid sings, in the second book of his *Fausti*, “*Sæpe avidum fugiens restitet agna lupum.*” And to compare an insatiable oppressor to the wolf, was not uncommon among the ancients; thus Mithridates says of the Romans, that they had the disposition of wolves: “*Inexplebiles sanguinis atque imperii divitiarumque avidos ac jejunos.*”

The wolf is an enemy to all society, and keeps no company even with those of his own species. It was the opinion of some ancient writers, however, that he sometimes admits a single associate in his predatory excursions; only one proof shall be quoted from Statius, who says they go forth in pairs:

— “*procedunt gemini, ceu foedere juncto*
Hyberna sub nocte lupi.” *Achilleidos*, lib. ii.

But when a large animal, a stag, an ox, or a formidable mastiff, is to be attacked, or when some danger is to be feared, they form a league, according to the poet, and issue forth in bands to seek the prey: and on these occasions, if Xenophon is worthy of credit, some keep off the shepherds, and some carry away the booty.^w

τῆς μὲν ἀπελαυνεῖν τὴν φυλάκην, τῆς δὲ ἀρπάζειν.

The myrmidons in Homer, resembled a band of “carnivorous wolves, whose hearts were inflamed by invincible

^w In *Hipparchico*.

courage, that tear in pieces, and devour a large horned stag, which they had killed in the mountains; and their jaws are dyed in blood; then they go off in a body to drink at the dark fountain, with their slender tongues, belching forth the swallowed gore."

Και τ' ἀγέληδον ιασιν, ἀπο κρήνης μελανύδρου. *Il. lib. xvi, l. 156, &c.*

The prey which the band has obtained, by their common exertions, they divide among themselves, and every one takes his part, which if able, he forthwith devours, or reserves for a future meal.* This predatory expedition is no sooner finished, than they separate, and each returns in silence to his den. To the occasional combination of these animals, the inspired writer probably alludes in a passage already quoted: "her judges are evening wolves;" selfish and solitary in their natural dispositions, but associated for a time, that they may prosecute with more success their schemes of rapine and extortion.

Weaker than many other beasts of prey, and proportionably timid, the wolf generally chooses to conceal his movements under the veil of night; this is indeed common to all savage animals, but is more proper to him than to the lion, the bear, or the leopard. It is for this reason, the sacred writers emphatically call him the "wolf of the evening;" and Virgil sings how he lies in ambush for a full cote of sheep, growling at the folds, enduring winds and rains at the hours of midnight.

—— "pleno lupus insidiatus ovili," &c. *Æn. lib. ix, l. 60.*

In the prophecies of Habakkuk, the Assyrian "horses are fiercer than the evening wolves." This expression some refer to their speed, others to the acuteness of their sight; the celebrated Bochart supposes, that since the wolf is very

* Bochart. *Hieroz. lib. iii, cap. 10, p. 823.*

swift, and sharp sighted also,^y the prophet might have respect to both. But he rather inclines to the common opinion, that the inspired writer alludes to the keenness of his temper, which is expressed in our translation with sufficient propriety. The Assyrian horses were fiercer, keener, or more high spirited, than wolves that come abroad in the evening, pinched with hunger, and eager for the chase. The prophet, by using the comparative degree, admits, that both the horse and the wolf are keen or fierce; and in the same manner Virgil applies the term to both:

——— “et genus acre luporum.” *Geor. lib. iii, l. 64.*

And in the *Æneid*;

“At puer Ascanius mediis in vallibus acri
Gaudet equo.” *Lib. iv, l. 156.*

In the sacred writings, the wolf is every where opposed to sheep and goats, as if his cruelty and rage were reserved especially for these creatures. Thus, our Lord informs his disciples: “Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves;” and in one of his discourses to the Pharisees, “But he that is an hireling - - - seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.” The prophet Isaiah seems to lead our attention to the same circumstance, when he describes the wonderful change which is to take place in the world, under the benign influence of the gospel: “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,” and near the close of his prophecy; “the wolf and the lamb shall feed together.”^a The son of Sirach takes up the same idea, and inquires, What communion can be

^y *Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. x, cap. 26. Plin. Hist. Natur. lib. xi, cap. 37.* “The eyes of the wolf,” says the last writer, “shine and radiate light: which is the reason he sees in the dark.” ^z *Isa. lxxv, 25.*

between a wolf and a lamb? In Homer, the wolves are described as rushing with impetuous violence upon the lambs or the kids, making great havock, carrying away from the flocks, those which have been dispersed in the mountains by the folly of the shepherd:

Ὅς δὲ λύκοι ἀρνεσσὶν ἐπεχραον ἢ ἐριφοῖσι. *Il. lib. xvi, l. 352, &c.*

And Virgil says, the wolf is fatal to the flocks, as showers of rain to ripened corn, and shaking winds to trees.

“Triste lupus stabulis.” *3 Ecl. l. 80.*

But, it is probable, that the hostility of the wolf to the flock or the herd, arises from no particular hatred which he bears to them, but because he finds them, an easier prey than the greater part of other animals.

His strength is so great, that “he carries a sheep in his mouth, and at the same time outruns the shepherds. His bite is cruel, and always more obstinate in proportion to the smallness of the resistance; for when an animal can defend himself, he is cautious and circumspect. Although timid, he is ferocious; and so hardy and robust, that he runs and roams about whole days and nights in quest of his prey. He prefers living to dead animals; but when he can find nothing better, he devours the most putrid carcases. Human flesh is grateful to his taste, and if stronger, he would perhaps eat no other. Wolves have been known to follow armies, to come in troops to the field of battle, where bodies are carelessly interred, to tear them up, and to devour them with an insatiable avidity; and when once accustomed to human flesh, these wolves ever after attack men; prefer the shepherd to the flock; devour women, and carry off children.”^a So mischievous, so dangerous are these creatures, that whole

^a Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. iv, p. 204.

countries, are sometimes obliged to arm for their destruction. These facts illustrate the force and beauty of a passage in the prophecies of Isaiah, to which reference has more than once been made, where he describes the tranquil and prosperous state of the world and the church, under the reign of Messiah: "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid." That insidious creature shall be divested of its native cunning, fierceness, and cruelty, which render it an object of terror and disgust, even to the human kind, and shall associate in peace with the lamb, upon which it was accustomed to prey, as harmless, and as little to be feared, as that inoffensive creature. Or to drop the metaphor, men of fierce, cruel, and rapacious dispositions, shall, by the preaching of the gospel, and the power of divine grace, be transformed into humble, gentle, and peaceful disciples of Jesus; and shall no more vex and harass one another or injure the church of Christ, but quietly live together in the same religious society, united in the strictest bonds of peace and friendship.

The false teacher is often compared to the wolf, in the holy Scriptures; and, without straining the metaphor, several points of resemblance may be perceived. "Beware," said our Lord to the multitudes that attended his ministry, "beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing;" gentle, unassuming, and harmless in their demeanour and professions, as that inoffensive animal, in whose fleece they are clothed, "but inwardly, are ravening wolves;"^b in their temper and secret purposes, deceitful, cruel, and rapacious; and in their conduct, under the covert of candour, moderation, and piety, lying in wait

^b Mat. vii, 15.

to beguile the unwary soul. Such were the men, concerning whom the apostle warned the elders of the church at Ephesus: For I know this, that after my departing, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock."^c Covetous and ungodly men, under the character of public teachers, were already watching near the fold, in expectation of his departure, whose vigilance and authority had prevented the accomplishment of their designs, ready to seize the first instance of negligence on the part of the subordinate shepherds, to secure their prey.

That cruel and rapacious animal, is often selected as the appropriate symbol of tyrannical rulers, and bloody persecutors of the good and the worthy. The princes of Jerusalem, in the time of Ezekiel, are compared to "wolves ravening the prey," to shed blood, to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain. A similar complaint was made by another prophet, long before: Her princes within her are roaring lions," fierce and ravenous, preying upon all around them, feared and hated by the whole community; "her judges," whose office it is to distribute justice with an impartial hand, to protect the weak, and to vindicate the injured, are like "evening wolves," greedy, rapacious and insatiable; they judge for reward; they grievously oppress the poor and the needy; they intimidate the good, and encourage the wicked, till the bonds of society are at last dissolved, and every place to which their influence reaches, is filled with violence. This miserable state of things the people of Israel more than once experienced, as we know from the testimony of their own prophets, in the decline of their government; and the apostles and other ministers of religion under the present dispensation, have often had

^c Acts xx, 29.

to drink of the same cup. These also were sent forth "as sheep in the midst of wolves," and suffered all the injustice and cruelty which the comparison involves. Happy world! when in every land on which the sun shines, the prince shall be a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well; and when the ministers of religion shall be indeed the servants of Christ, spending their days and exhausting their strength, in turning sinners from the error of their way.

The Hyæna.

Modern interpreters have not found this savage beast in the sacred volume. But the celebrated Bochart has fully proved, that the term (צבוע) tseboa is sometimes employed by the sacred writers to denote the hyæna.^d The passage in first Samuel, rendered in our version "the valley of Zeboim," ancient expositors translate "the valley of Hyænas:" although the Chaldee has "the valley of vipers or basilisks." But our author contends, that in this text it ought to be rendered hyæna; because this name occurs in the Syriac version, and because the Arabians call the hyæna, dsaubun, which is clearly derived from tseboa, and has been gradually changed into dubbah, the name by which, according to Dr. Shaw, the hyæna is still known in Barbary.^e The Hebrews call him tseboa, from the dark strips or streaks with which his colour is variegated. In the same manner, the Greek interpreters, and after them Bochart, render that passage in the prophet, in our version "Mine heritage is unto me as a speckled bird," (העיט צבוע), 'Mine heritage unto me as a hyæna or striped wild beast. Is there a wild beast all around upon her.' In the chapter from which the quotation is taken, Jehovah sharply expostulates with his people, be-

^d Hieroz. lib. iii, p. 829. ^e Shaw's Trav. vol. i, p. 216.

cause they had forgotten the favours they had so often received from him, and manifested towards him those fierce and untractable dispositions, which we justly execrate in beasts of prey. This interpretation is also supposed to be more agreeable to the context. In the preceding verse, the prophet complains in the name of the Lord: "Mine heritage is unto me as a lion in the forest, it crieth out against me, therefore have I hated it;" and in the close of the ninth verse, we have this invitation: "Come ye, assemble all ye beasts of the field, come to devour."^f But, contends Bochart, it would certainly be very incongruous to mention a speckled bird among beasts of prey.

This reasoning, however, is unsatisfactory; for by the authority of Bochart himself, a species of serpents is designed by the same name, and that both these animals are so called from the various colours with which their bodies are marked. The use of the name *tseboa*, therefore, which signifies merely spotted or streaked, determines nothing; it equally applies to beasts, serpents, and birds. To make good his opinion, he is obliged to render עֵיט *eet* a beast, instead of a bird of prey. And why not, says he, since the verb (עֵיט or עֵיט) out or eet, belongs not to birds only, but to any animal that rushes on its prey? But if so, then by his own admission, it may be interpreted as in our version, a speckled bird, or bird of prey; and by consequence neither does the use of this term determine the question. But it remains to be proved, that the words in the Hebrew text belong to any animal that rushes on its prey. This is so far from being the case, that common use, the supreme arbiter in language, has restricted it to birds only; for, it is presumed, no instance can be produced in which the word is used for a beast of prey. "But to shew,"

^f Jer. xii, 8, 9.

continues Bochart, “that the name eet (עֵיט) belongs not to birds only, (צִפּוֹר) tsippor a bird, is sometimes added to it diacritically, as in this threatening: “I will give thee unto the ravenous birds;”^g (לְעֵיט צִפּוֹר) every (עֵיט) eet not being a bird, but beasts of the ravenous and carnivorous kind, being included in that name. It has been already shewn, that the Hebrew term (עֵיט) eet, never signifies a beast of prey; and Bochart has produced no proof that the word (צִבּוֹר) tsippor is used by the prophet to determine the sense. Nor could he use it in this manner, if it is never applied to beasts; he must therefore use it merely in the way of illustration. The only ambiguous term here, is (צִבּוֹעַ) tsebouah, striped or speckled, which may denote a bird adorned with variegated plumes, perhaps of the eagle or falcon kind, some of which are beautifully speckled; as it is “attributed to a species of serpent, as well as to the hyæna, for a similar reason;” and accordingly, the generic name עֵיט the bird of prey, seems to be added to it for the sake of discrimination. If these remarks be just, the argument derived by our learned author from the incongruity of mentioning a bird of prey among the beasts of the field, must fall to the ground: we must take the Scriptures as they are, without attempting to bend them to our views of propriety. It is not uncommon with the sacred writers to place the ravenous fowls of heaven and the beasts of the field in the same sentence. Thus the prophet Ezekiel threatens Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: “I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured;”^h and the arrangements of Providence correspond with the words of the prophet; for both the

^g Ezek. xxxix, 4.^h Ezek. xxxix, 4.

birds and the beasts of prey are jointly commissioned by Heaven to execute his vengeance on his guilty creatures. But, what is not a little remarkable, the very arrangement which our author blames, and from which he endeavours to extract an argument in support of his opinion, is adopted by another prophet in a passage which he has overlooked : “ They shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth ; and the fowls shall summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them.”ⁱ In the verse under consideration, the word *הָעֵיט* in the second clause, must be admitted to signify birds of prey ; and this furnishes a strong presumption, that in the first clause it bears the same sense. This presumption is considerably strengthened by the context. In the preceding verse, Jehovah had complained that his people had acted towards him “ as a lion,” a particular species of wild beast ; in this he is supposed to compare their behaviour to that of a bird of prey, equally fierce and rapacious : hence, he calls in return upon other ravenous creatures, birds as well as beasts, to come forward and avenge his cause : “ Come, ye birds of prey that are round about her, assemble all ye beasts of the field, come to devour.”

The Fox.

The fox is not a vagabond like the wolf, and other beasts of prey, wandering in the desert without any certain place of rest ; he lives in a settled domestic state, and knows well where to choose the situation of his dwelling, and how to make it safe and commodious. He digs his abode at the entrance of a wood, and if possible, within hearing of the hamlet, where the game is plenty ; and at the bottom of

ⁱ Isa. xviii, 6.

a rock, or among the roots of trees, where he cannot be uncovered. But he does not always submit to the labour of digging his own habitation; when he lights upon the hole of a badger, in a proper situation, he places himself at the entrance, and keeps out the rightful owner; or if the badger be within, and cannot be dislodged by force, he compels him to retire by the offensive smell of his ordure, with which, in this case, he takes care to pollute the mouth of the den. When the badger is expelled, he takes possession, and fits it up for his own accommodation.^j Here he is more comfortably lodged than was the Saviour of sinners, when he dwelt with men: "The foxes," said the Man of sorrows, "the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."^k To save his people from their sins, he was not content with submitting to be despised and rejected of men, to make himself of no reputation, and move in the humblest walk of life; so great was his love and condescension, that he denied himself many comforts, which, as the creator and preserver of all things, he bestows on the beasts of the field and the fowls of heaven.

The fox knows how to suit himself to circumstances; when he has no habitation under ground, or cannot find one to his liking, a ruined tower or a deserted house, at a convenient distance from the inhabited country, affords him a shelter.^l This circumstance is beautifully remarked in the Lamentations of Jeremiah: "For this our heart is faint; for these things our eyes are dim, because of the mountain of Zion which is desolate, the foxes walk upon

^j Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. iv, p. 215. Bochart. Hieroz. lib. iii, cap. 13, p. 852.

^k Mat. viii, 20.

^l Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. xvii, cap. 17.

it." That sacred mountain, where the temple stood, whither the tribes of Israel went up at the solemn festivals, where the voice of unnumbered worshippers was daily heard, is now left without a tenant or single visitor, save the solitary fox, which has chosen his retreat in the silent courts, and, undisturbed by the foot of man, walks at his ease in the holy cloisters.

Like other beasts of prey, he is exceedingly voracious; fruits and flesh of all kinds are agreeable to his taste; and, like the wolf, he visits the field of battle, to prey upon the dying and the dead.^m This trait in his character has not escaped the observation of David; for, in the sixty-third psalm, he foretells the destruction of his enemies in these terms: "Those that seek my soul to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth, They shall fall by the sword; they shall be a portion for foxes." It was reckoned by the ancients more dishonourable to be devoured by foxes, a feeble and deceitful race, than by wild beasts of a higher class. In some places, criminals were cast headlong into deep pits where they were torn to pieces by these voracious animals which entered the place by means of subterraneous passages.ⁿ When game fails him, or when the sword has ceased to supply his wants, he devours with equal greediness, honey, fruits, and particularly grapes. In allusion to his eager desire to the fruit of the vine,^o it is said in the Song of Solomon, "Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes." In Scripture, the church is often compared to

^m Bochart. Hieroz. lib. iii, p. 849. Aristotel. Politicor. lib. i, cap. 8.

ⁿ Plin. Hist. Natur. lib. xi, cap. 37. Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. iv, p. 218. Theocritus, Idyll. 1 and 5. Varro de Re Rust. lib. i, cap. 8.

^o Varro de Re Rustica, lib. i, cap. 8.

a vineyard; her members to the vines with which it is stored; and by consequence, the grapes may signify all the fruits of righteousness, which those mystical vines produce. The foxes that spoil these vines, must therefore mean false teachers, who corrupt the purity of doctrine, obscure the simplicity of worship, overturn the beauty of appointed order, break the unity of believers, and extinguish the life and vigour of Christian practice. These words of Ezekiel may be understood in the same sense: "O Jerusalem! thy prophets, (or as the contest clearly proves) thy flattering teachers, are as foxes in the deserts;"^p and this name they receive, because, with vulpine subtlety, they speak lies in hypocrisy. Such teachers, the apostle calls "wolves in sheep's clothing;" deceitful workers, who, by their cunning, subvert whole houses; and whose word, like the tooth of a fox upon the vine, eats as a canker.

The book of Judges contains a singular anecdote, of the mischief which Samson did by means of this animal to the property of his enemies. He "went and caught three hundred foxes, and took fire-brands, and turned tail to tail, and put a fire-brand in the midst, between two tails; and when he had set the brands on fire, he let them go into the standing corn of the Philistines, and burnt up both the shocks, and also the standing corn, with the vineyards and olives."^q On reading this curious statement, the infidel asks with an air of triumph, How could Samson procure so many foxes in so short a time? To this question it may be answered, the concurring testimony of travellers, clearly proves, that the land of Promise abounded with foxes. The same fact is suggested by the prediction of David, that his enemies should become the prey of foxes;

^p Ezek. xiii, 4.

^q Jud. xv, 4.

and by the invitation of Solomon already quoted from the Song.^r Some districts and cities in that country, take their name from the fox; a sure proof of their numbers in those parts: “Thus, the land of Shual, mentioned in the first book of Samuel, signifies the land of the fox;”^s and Hazar-shual, the name of a city, belonging to the tribe of Judah, or Simeon, means the fox’s habitation.^t Besides, the term foxes, in the opinion of Bochart, embraces the thoes, a species of wolf, which very much resemble the fox, and are extremely numerous in Judea, particularly about Cæsarea.^u Bellonius asserts, that they may be seen in troops of two or three hundred, prowling about in quest of their prey: and Morizon, who travelled in Palestine, says, that foxes swarm in that country, and that very great numbers of them lurk in hedges and in ruinous buildings. To find so many of these animals, therefore, could be no great difficulty to a person accustomed to the chase, as this renowned Israelite may be reasonably supposed to have been. Nor is it said, that Samson caught all these foxes in one, or even in two days; a whole week, or even a month, might be spent in the capture, for any thing that appears to the contrary. Add to this, that, although Samson himself might be a most expert hunter, we have no reason to think he caught all these animals alone. So eminent a personage as the chief magistrate of Israel, might employ as many people as he pleased, in accomplishing his purpose. When, for example, it is said, that Solomon built the temple at Jerusalem, no man supposes, that he executed the work with his own hands; he only caused the work to be done: and, in the same manner, Samson may be said

^r Song ii, 15.

^t Josh. xv, 28, and xix, 3.

^s 1 Sam. xiii, 17.

^u Hieroz. lib. iii, cap. 13, p. 854.

to do what he only commanded to be done, or assisted in doing. Nor can it be reasonably denied, that the God who made the world, and by his special providence, watched over the prosperity of his ancient people, and intended at this time, to deliver them from their enemies, could easily dispose matters, so as to facilitate or secure the capture of as many foxes, as the design of Samson required.

In this singular stratagem, he is thought by some writers, to have had two things in view ; at once, to deliver his country from those noxious animals, and to do the greatest possible mischief to his enemies. No kind of animals could be more suited to his purpose, especially when coupled together in this manner ; for they run long and swiftly, not in a direct line, but with many windings, so that, while they dragged in opposite directions, they spread the fire over all the fields of the Philistines with the greater rapidity and success, and were at the same time prevented from getting into the woods, or holes in the rocks, where the fire-brands had been extinguished, and the stratagem rendered ineffectual.

Mr. Burder, on this incident, observes, “ There is reason to think, that there was nothing new or uncommon in this operation, as it was most obvious for the end proposed, that the wit of man could devise. We accordingly find,” says he, “ that Ovid alludes to the practice, and mentions, that foxes and fire-brands were every year exhibited at Rome, and killed in the circus. For it was the custom in many places, to sacrifice by way of retaliation, every animal which did particular injury to the fruits of the earth. In consequence of this, they introduced these foxes, which had been employed for that purpose, with fire-brands.

“ Cur igitur missæ vinetis ardentia tædis

Terga ferunt vulpes causa docenda mihi.”

He then mentions an instance of much injury done by a fox so accoutred by fire :

“ Qua fugit incendit vestitos messibus agros
 Damnosis vires ignibus aura dabat.”

On this account, the whole race, according to the poet, were condemned at the festival, called Cerealea, to be in their turns set on fire :

“ Utque luat poenas gens hæc Cerealibus ardet,
 Quoque modo segetes perdidit ipsa perit.”

The same custom is alluded to, proverbially, more than once, by Lycophron, and seems to have been well known in Greece. He makes Cassandra represent Ulysses as a man, both of cunning and mischief, and styles him very properly, λαμπηρος, a fox with a fire-brand at his tail ; for, wherever he went, mischief followed. Suidas also takes notice of this custom, when he speaks of a kind of beetle, which the Bœotians named tipha. They imagined, that, if to this they were to fasten some inflammable matter, it would be easy to set any thing on fire.” He adds, that this was sometimes practised with foxes.^v

The coincidence between the practice of Samson and the custom of the Greeks and Romans, is undoubtedly curious and interesting ; but it will not prove, as this respectable writer imagines, that the custom was general in the east. In the two first lines quoted from Ovid, the poet says, that when he went from Rome to Peligni, he passed through the town of Carseoli, and there he learned from his host, an old man, that the custom of binding a fire-brand to the tail of a fox, was done in memory of an animal of this species at Carseoli, which a peasant, when he had caught it, wrapped in straw, which he set on fire. The fox fled in the utmost terror ; and, wherever he came, burnt down

^v Burder's Oriental Customs, *in loc.*

the fields of corn. Now, it cannot be admitted, that so solemn a rite derived its origin from such an obscure beginning. Is it to be supposed, that because a single fox, wrapped in straw at Carseoli, set on fire a few spots of standing corn in his flight, every year, at Rome, on a certain day, a number of foxes were let loose with fire-brands on their tails? The truth seems to be, that the festive custom in Greece and Italy, was borrowed from the Phœnicians, the lineal descendants of the Philistines. It is well known to every classical scholar, that many peculiar customs of these two celebrated nations, were imported from Phœnicia, where the inhabitants had some reason to commemorate the mischief which Samson's foxes had done to the property of their ancestors. The circumstances of the custom perfectly agree with the device of Samson, but seem to have very little relation to the incident at Carseoli; for the foxes exhibited at Rome were not wrapped in straw, as the fox at Carseoli was, but had the fire-brands bound to their tails, as in the story of Samson: for Ovid sings:

— “junctis ardentia tædis

Terga ferant vulpes.” —

Fast. lib. iv.

And it is a most remarkable circumstance, that the foxes were let loose at Rome, not at the time of wheat harvest in Italy, but in Palestine, which falls about the middle of April. Let us hear Ovid himself:

“Sed jam preteritas ubi quartus Lucifer idus,” &c.

The meaning of the passage is, the Hyades fall on the fourth day of the ides of April, that is, on the seventeenth day of that month, or, which is the same thing, on the fifteenth of the kalends of May; and on the third day after, that is, on the twentieth of April, the Curule games are celebrated in the circus, and the foxes are let loose.

But this is the time of sowing at Rome, not the time of harvest ; for Virgil says :

“ Ante tibi Eoæ Atlantides abscondantur
Debita quam sulcis committas semina.” *Geor. lib. i, l. 138.*

But, in Egypt and Palestine, it is quite different ; for, in those countries, the harvest begins in the month Abib, which answers to our March ; and by consequence, on the day after the passover, that is, in the middle of the month Abib or March, the sheaf of the first fruits was according to the law of Moses offered to God. But at the feast of Pentecost, fifty days after, the harvest was nearly finished ; and for this reason it is called, in the twenty-third chapter of Exodus, the feast of harvest, not of harvest begun, but completed. These two feasts, therefore, the passover and Pentecost, included the time of harvest, which began with the first, and ended with the last. The barley harvest came on immediately after the passover ; and the wheat harvest succeeded in the middle of April. This then, was the season of the year when Samson, provoked by the conduct of his father-in-law, turned loose the foxes among the standing corn of the Philistines. In this statement, we discover the reason that the sacred historian thus begins his narrative : “ And it came to pass within a whole year after, in the time of wheat harvest, that Samson visited his wife with a kid.” Part of the crop was then standing, and part was in the shock. It is therefore extremely probable, that the conflagration happened on the very day when the foxes were let loose into the circus, in commemoration of that burning which was first practised among the Phœnicians, and afterwards borrowed from them by the Romans.

The fox is celebrated by every natural historian for his address and cunning. The ancients believed he could not

be taken with snares, traps or nets ; for he is sufficiently cunning to perceive and avoid them ; he can gnaw asunder or untie the knots of the cords in which he is entangled, and by the most artful contrivances escape from destruction.^w What other beasts of prey accomplish by force, he performs by craft, and often with more success. Acute and circumspect, ingenious and prudent, he suits his conduct and operations to existing circumstances, and always reserves some art for unforeseen accidents. In securing his own safety, he is extremely vigilant. Although he possesses more agility and perseverance than the wolf, yet he trusts not entirely to the swiftness of his course, but endeavours to provide for himself an asylum, whither he retires from pressing dangers, where he dwells and brings up his young. “ On the border of some wood, in the neighbourhood of a cottage, where he commonly fixes his abode, he listens to the shrill voice of the cock, and the crying of the poultry : he scents them at a distance ; he chooses his time with judgment ; he conceals his road, as well as his design ; he steals forward with caution, sometimes even trailing his body, and seldom fails to accomplish his purpose. If he can leap the wall, or get in underneath, he ravages the court-yard, puts all to death, and then retires softly with his prey, which he either hides under the herbage, or carries off to his kennel ; he returns in a few minutes for another, which he carries off, or conceals in the same manner, but in a different place. In this way he proceeds till the progress of the sun, or some movements perceived in the house, advertise him, that it is time to suspend his operations, and to retire to his den.”^x These

^w Bochart. Hieroz. lib. iii, cap. 13, p. 855.

^x Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. iv, p. 215. Aristotel. Hist. lib. i, cap. 1. Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. iv, cap. 39 ; lib. vi, cap. 24 ; and lib. xiii, c. 11.

facts illustrate the propriety of our Lord's reply to those who advised him to flee from the machinations of Herod : " And he said unto them, Go ye and tell that fox, behold I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day, and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected." ^y Herod was an insidious, crafty, and refined politician, and a cruel unfeeling prince. He recommended himself with great art to the Jews, by pretending a love for their religion ; whilst, intent on his own private interests, he servilely flattered the Roman emperor. It is known to all who are versant in the history of those times, by what arts he seduced his brother's wife, and with what cruelty and injustice he treated John the Baptist, who reproved him for his incestuous connection. The Herodians, it has been said, were his creatures and spies, who spread themselves over the country, to hear the conversation of the people concerning their master ; and were secretly sent to watch the discourses and proceedings of the Saviour. The title of fox, therefore, could not be applied with more propriety to any human character. But although Herod was confessedly artful and cruel as the fox, some have doubted if it was lawful for his subjects, of whom our Lord was one, to reproach him. But since the Saviour did reproach him, it was lawful ; for he did always the things which pleased his heavenly Father : and the Spirit of inspiration attests him as the " holy One and the just." To this conclusive reply, may be added, that the objection is founded on the divine right of kings ; a doctrine which cannot be sufficiently detested, and which has long been exploded by the most enlightened writers on jurisprudence.

^y Luke xiii, 32.

CHAP. IX.

WILD INOFFENSIVE ANIMALS.

*The Wild Ass.—The Hart.—The Ibex or Wild Goat.—The Antelope.—
The Unicorn.—The Coney.—The Mouse.—The Badger.—The Mole.—
The Bat.*

The Wild Ass.

THIS animal was called *ovos argeios* among the Greeks, and onager by the Romans. Some natural historians consider it as a different species from the tame and domestic ass ; but others, among whom is the celebrated Buffon, affirm, that it differs from its unhappy relation, only in those particulars which are the proper effects of independence and liberty. Although more elegantly shaped, the general form of its body is the same ; but in temper and manners it is extremely dissimilar. Intended to fill a higher place in the kingdom of nature, than its abject and enslaved brother, it exhibits endowments, which in all ages have commanded the admiration of every observer. Animated by an unconquerable love of liberty, this high spirited animal submits his neck with great reluctance to the yoke of man ; extremely jealous of the least restraint, he shuns the inhabited country, and steadily rejects all the delicacies it has to offer. His chosen haunt is the solitary and inhospitable desert, where he roves at his ease, exulting in the possession of unrestrained freedom.^a These are not accidental nor acquired traits in his character ; but instincts,

^a Bochart. Hieroz. lib. iii, p. 867. Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. iii.—Onager.

implanted by the hand of his Maker, that are neither to be extinguished nor modified by length of time, nor change of circumstances. To this wild and untameable temper, Jehovah himself condescends to direct the attention of Job, when he answered him out of the whirlwind, and said: "Who hath sent out the wild ass free? or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass? whose house I have made the wilderness, and the barren land his dwellings. He scorneth the multitude of the city; neither regardeth he the crying of the driver. The range of the mountains is his pasture, and he searcheth after every green thing."^b

The proper name of this animal in the Hebrew language, is פֶּרָא, Phæraë, a term which, according to some writers, is expressive of its extreme suspicion. It is employed by Moses, to denote the wild and untractable disposition of Ishmael, and his descendants; and by Zophar, to characterise a vain, self-righteous, and obstinate person. In accordance with this idea, the noun furnishes a verb in the Hiphil form, which signifies to act as wildly as the onager.

Others derive the noun from a Chaldee verb, which signifies to run with great swiftness; and every writer, ancient and modern, who has treated of this animal, has attested the wonderful celerity with which it flies over the desert. According to Leo Africanus, the wild ass yields only to the horses of Barbary; and Xenophon avers in his *Anabasis*, that it out-runs the fleetest horses. It has feet like the whirlwind, says Oppian; Ælian asserts, that it seems as if it were carried forward by wings like a bird.^c

^b Job xxxix, 5.

^c *Anab.* lib. i, cap. 5, sec. 2, Hutchison's edition, Glasgow. Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. xiv, cap. 10, and lib. xvi, cap. 9.

These testimonies are confirmed by Professor Gmelin, who saw numerous troops of them in the deserts of Great Tartary, and says, The onagers are animals adapted to running, and of such swiftness, that the best horses cannot equal them. Relying on its extraordinary powers, it frequently mocks the pursuit of the hunter; and in the striking description of its Creator, "Scorneth the multitude of the city," that invade its retreats, and seek its destruction. It laughs (as the original term properly signifies) at their numbers and their speed, and seems to take a malicious pleasure in disappointing their hopes. Xenophon states, that the onagers in Mesopotamia, when pursued on horseback, will stop suddenly in the midst of their career, till the hunters approach, and then dart away with surprising velocity; and again stop, as if inviting them to make another effort to overtake them, but immediately dart away again like an arrow shot from a bow: indeed it would be impossible for men to take them, without the assistance of art. "We gave chase," says Mr. Morier, "to two wild asses, but which had so much the speed of our horses, that when they had got at some distance, they stood still and looked behind at us, snorting with their noses in the air as if in contempt of our endeavours to catch them."^d The hunters, however, often lie in wait for them at the ponds of brackish water, to which they resort to drink; or take them alive by means of concealed pits, half filled with plants and branches of trees, to lessen the creature's fall. At other times the chase is continued by relays of fresh horses, which the hunters mount as the others are exhausted, till the strength of the animal is so completely worn out, that it can be easily overtaken.

^d Trav. vol. i, p. 201.

The wild ass, unsocial in his temper, and impatient of restraint, frequents the solitary wilderness, and the vast inhospitable desert, the salt marsh, and the mountain range.^e This is the scene adapted to his nature and instincts, and his proper domain allotted to him by the author of his being. We are not left to infer this fact from the manners and habits of the animal; Jehovah himself has attested it in these terms: "Whose house I have made the wilderness, and the barren lands his dwellings." He who made the wild ass free, and loosed his bands, provides a habitation for him in the desert, where the voice of man is not heard, nor a human dwelling meets his eye. But every desert is not equally to his liking; it is the barren or salt land in which he delights.^f So grateful is salt to his taste, that he uniformly prefers brackish water to fresh, and selects for his food those plants that are impregnated with saline particles, or that have bitter juices. He, therefore, retires from the cultivated or fertile regions, not merely to be free from the domination of man, but to enjoy the pasture which is agreeable to his instincts. "The multitude," or the abundance of the city, "he despises for the salt or bitter leaf on the sandy waste."

Into such a state of desolation and sterility was the inheritance of God's ancient people reduced, by the arms of Nebuchadnezzar: "Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briers, yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city: because the palaces shall be forsaken, the multitude of the city shall be left, the forts and towers shall be dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a

^e Varro de Re Rust. lib. ii, cap. 6. Plin. Hist. Nat. lib. viii, cap. 30.

^f Bochart. Hieroz. lib. iii, cap. 16, p. 872. Plin. Hist. Nat. lib. xxxi, cap. 7. Vir. Geor. lib. ii, l. 288.

pasture of flocks.”^g A more affecting picture can scarcely be conceived; the depopulated fields, and ruined cities, of a country once flowing with milk and honey, were to become the favourite haunts of those shy creatures “for ever,” or during the long period of seventy years. “Until the Spirit” should be poured upon them from on high, from the beginning to the end of the captivity, a tedious and irksome period to the unhappy captives, were the wild asses to stray through their barren fields, and repose in their deserted houses, undisturbed by the presence of man. But the pride and barbarity of their oppressor, were soon visited with a corresponding punishment. He was deprived of reason, which he had so greatly abused, and by the violence of his disorder, “driven from the sons of men, and his heart was made like the beasts; and his dwelling was with the wild asses,” in the salt land, and frightful desert. He seems to have been divested of every thing human but the form; irrational and sensual, he was guided solely by his animal propensities. Nor was he longer able to distinguish what was becoming or agreeable, even to the animal nature of man; every desire and appetite was become so brutish, that he felt no wish to associate with beings of his own kind, but lived with the beasts, and fed in their pastures.^h

Some respectable writers have considered the *onager* as a solitary creature, refusing to associate even with those of his own species, because he shuns the presence of man, and frequents the most frightful solitudes. But this hasty opinion is completely refuted by the testimony of modern travellers, the nomadic hordes of Tartary, and the trading companies of Bukharia. From their accounts

^g Isa. xxxii, 13, 14.

^h Dan. v, 21.

we learn, that the wild asses are still very numerous in the deserts of Great Tartary, and come annually in great herds, which spread themselves in the mountainous deserts to the north and east of lake Aral. Here they pass the summer, and assemble in the autumn by hundreds, and even by thousands, in order to return in company to their former retreats in the mountains of northern Asia. The gregarious character of the wild ass is not in reality contradicted by the prophet in these words: "For they are gone up to Assyria, a wild ass alone by himself: Ephraim hath hired lovers."ⁱ In this passage he describes the perverse and untractable dispositions of Ephraim, and the certain destruction to which their obstinacy exposed them. A wild ass alone, they were by their foolish conduct ready to become a prey to the destroyer. But it is rather the king of Assyria, than the ten tribes, whom he compares to that animal. Instead of trusting in the Lord their God, they courted the favour, and solicited the protection of that ambitious and artful monarch, who, like "a wild ass alone," consulted only his own selfish inclinations, and aimed at his own aggrandisement. This ill advised measure, from which they promised themselves so much advantage, he declares, would certainly hasten the catastrophe which they sought to avoid. They should find when too late, that they had been the dupes of his deceitful policy, and the victims of his unprincipled ambition.^j

The wild ass, like almost every creature that inhabits the barren wilderness, is reduced to subsist on coarse and

ⁱ Hos. viii, 9.

^j The gregarious temper of the wild ass is also mentioned by Varro and Pliny in the passages just quoted, and by other ancient writers, cited by Bochart, lib. iii, cap. 16, p. 870.

scanty fare. The sweets of unbounded liberty are counterbalanced by the unremitting labour which is necessary to procure him a precarious subsistence. In those salt and dreary wastes, which providence has allotted for his residence, very few plants are to be found, and those, from the heat of the climate, and the nature of the soil, are stunted in their growth, and bitter to the taste: “They see not when good cometh;” for they grow in the parched places in the wilderness, “in a salt land, and not inhabited.”^k In such inhospitable regions, the wild ass is compelled to traverse a great extent of country, to scour the plains, and range over the mountains, in order to find here and there a few blades of coarse, withered grass, and browse the tops of the few stunted shrubs which languish in those sandy wilds. Such are the allusions involved in these words: “The range of the mountains is his pasture, and he searcheth after every green thing.”

It must not be supposed that a condition, apparently so hard, involves this animal in greater difficulties than many other wild beasts experience. The Creator has, with admirable wisdom and goodness, adapted his constitution and instincts to his situation and manner of life. His temperance corresponds with the barrenness of the soil, and his taste with the peculiar qualities of the plants which it produces; In consequence of this wise and gracious arrangement, a tuft of sickly grass, and a little brackish water, satisfy his moderate demands; and of these, we know from the testimony of Job, he commonly finds enough, even in the parched and sterile deserts of Arabia; “The wilderness yieldeth food for them, and for their children.” But, when these fail on the plains,

^k Jer. xvii, 6.

he retires to the mountains, where, under a more temperate sky, the herb still flourishes, and the water streams. This apparently trifling circumstance, the Psalmist deemed not unworthy of his notice, nor of being celebrated in the songs of Zion: "He sendeth the springs into the valleys which run among the hills: They give drink to every beast of the field, the wild asses quench their thirst."^h But, even these resources occasionally fail; the mountain herb is burnt up, and the springs are exhausted; then, in spite of his habitual temperance, he is reduced in common with other animals, to a state of severe suffering. At such times he takes his station on the top of a rock, to cool in the passing breeze, the fever which rages in his veins, and sucks in the air for want of water. To such a state of wretchedness was he reduced by the dearth which Jeremiah so feelingly describes: "The wild asses did stand in the high places; they snuffed up the wind like dragons; their eyes did fail because there was no grass."ⁱ They seek relief on the summits of the highest mountains from the overwhelming heat: they snuff up the wind like dragons, which stand daily for some hours with the head erect, and the mouth wide open towards the sky, sucking in the air; their eyes, which are extremely fine and sharp sighted, for want of nourishment, lose their brilliancy and power of vision. Such painful sufferings, we learn from Virgil, are sometimes experienced in the more temperate climate of Italy:

——— "Aut bucula cælum
Suspiciens, patulis captavit naribus auras." 1 *Geor.* l. 375.

Under the pressure of extreme want, like man and other animals, the wild ass becomes faint, his eyes fail,

^h Ps. civ, 10, 11.

ⁱ Jer. xiv, 6.

and he pines in silent despair; but in less trying circumstances, he expresses his uneasy feelings by frequently braying. From this harsh disagreeable sound, peculiar to the ass, he has obtained from his Maker, in a passage of Scripture already quoted, the appropriate name of the brayer: "Who hath sent out the wild ass free? or, who hath loosed the bands of the brayer" (עֲרִיר). The same instinct which excites the *onager* to complain in a low grumbling noise when he meets with any molestation, and in louder tones when hungry, and in want of pasture, caused the afflicted patriarch to mourn in the days of his adversity, and complain under his agonizing sufferings and cruel bereavements. His miserable comforters reproached him with indulging in loud and frequent complaints; and in reply, the patient sufferer puts the significant question: "Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass? Or loweth the ox over his fodder?" No: they are then contented and silent; and so was he in a state of prosperity. Then his tongue uttered no complaint; he was a stranger to a fretful and unquiet spirit. But, now that he was deprived of all his earthly comforts, agonized with pain, and oppressed with grief, it was as natural for him to complain as for the wild ass to bray, and the ox to low, when they can find no grass to allay the cravings of hunger.

To live with the wild ass in the desert, and to encounter the various hardships inseparable from his condition, has been justly reckoned by the orientals the lowest degree of wretchedness to which the poor and needy can be reduced; and to be insulted by such mean and contemptible persons, the last disgrace which fallen greatness is doomed to suffer. It accordingly added much to the

poignancy of Job's afflictions, that he had become the derision of these dregs of society, whose fathers he would have disdained to set with the dogs of his flock; whose families were unfit for any useful purpose, and had been from one generation to another a public nuisance. His description of their hereditary indigence and wretchedness, is extremely animated and striking. It is thus translated by Dr. Peddie, in his excellent essay on this article: "In want and severe hunger, they gnawed the desert; a place forsaken, desolate, and waste. They cropped the tops of the salt tasted herb upon the bush; and the root of the genista was their meat. From the society of men they were expelled, who chased them with shouting as they do a thief, to dwell in the precipices of the torrents, holes of the earth, and caverns of the rocks. Among the bushes they brayed: under the briars they were gathered together."^j

Every natural historian has recorded the extreme wildness of this animal. He is so jealous of his liberty, that on the slightest alarm, or the first appearance of danger, he flies with amazing swiftness into the desert. His senses are so acute, that it is impossible to approach him in the open country. But, in spite of all his vigilance, the hunter often encloses him in his toils, and leads him away into captivity. Even in this unhappy state, he never submits his neck to the yoke of man without a determined resistance. "Sent out free" by him that made him, he is tenacious of his independence, and opposes, to the extraordinary methods which his captors are forced to employ, the most savage obstinacy; and for the most part, he baffles all their endeavours to tame him; still he

^j Job xxx, 3-7.

“scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regards he the crying of the driver.” On the authority of this text, Chrysotom says, “this animal is strong and untameable; man can never subdue him, whatever efforts he may make for that purpose.”^k But Varro affirms, on the contrary, that “the wild ass is fit for labour; that he is easily tamed; and that when he is once tamed, he never resumes his original wildness.”^l The words of Jehovah certainly give no countenance to the opinion of the Greek father; they only intimate, that it is extremely difficult to subdue the high spirit, and stubborn temper of this animal; for the apostle James declares, that “every kind of beast is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind;”^m and great numbers of them are actually broken to the yoke in Persia, and some other countries. But, it appears from the statement of Professor Gmelin, that the Persians tame the young *onagers*;ⁿ and the reason probably is, that they seldom or never succeed in rendering a full grown *onager* serviceable to man.

Not more untameable and indocile is the wild ass, in the mind of Zophar, than the human kind in their present degenerate state: “Vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass’s colt.”^o Empty, self-conceited man, still aspires to equal God in wisdom and knowledge; still fondly supposes himself qualified to sit in judgment on the divine proceedings, and to take the exclusive management of his own affairs, although the wild ass’s colt is not more rude, indocile, and untractable.

^k Chrysostom in Catena.

^l De Re Rust. lib. ii, cap. 6. See also Plin. Natur. Hist. lib. viii, cap. 43.

^m James iii, 7.

ⁿ Taylor’s Calmet, vol. iv.

^o Job xi, 12.

Nor is this an acquired habit : he is born a wild ass's colt, and therefore by nature equally impatient of salutary restraint, equally wilful in consulting his own inclinations. And this defect in his character, no created arm is able to subdue ; it yields only to the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, who makes him willing in the day of effectual calling, by a display of almighty power.

This mortifying comparison of Zophar, is, in another part of the sacred volume, applied by the angel of the Lord to Ishmael and his posterity. “ And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.”^o The phrase, “a wild man,” it is well known, is in the original text, “a wild ass man,” that is, a man like a wild ass in temper and manners. The comparison seems to refer, first to Ishmael himself, and to intimate certain leading traits in his character; and then to his offspring in every succeeding age. The troops of *onagers*, are conducted by a leading stallion,^p that prefers the most arid deserts of the mountains, keeps watch while his companions repose, and gives the signal at the appearance of an enemy. The Nomades of Asia report of these animals, that the first of a troop which sees a serpent or a beast of prey, makes a certain cry, which brings in a moment, the whole herd around him, when each of them strives to destroy it instantly. Such were the character and manners of Ishmael. He was the first prince of his family, the founder of a powerful nation, of a rough, wild, and untractable disposition. Nor was this all; ambitious of supreme authority, he loved to place himself at the head of his rising community, to regulate its affairs, and

^o Gen. xvi, 12.

^p Taylor's Calmet, vol. iv.

direct its operations ; and, like the high spirited leader of the *onagers*, he could brook no rival. He discovered his ruling passion, when he was but a stripling in the house of his father. Determined to maintain his prerogatives as the elder son, and provoked to see a younger, and a child of a different mother, preferred before him, he gave vent to his indignation, by deriding his brother, and the feast which was made on his account. Expelled for his imprudence from his father's house, he made choice of the sandy desert for his permanent residence, and required the heads of all the families around him, either to acknowledge his supremacy, and treat him with the highest respect, or be driven from his station and neighbourhood. Wherever he pitched his tent, he expected, according to a custom of great antiquity, all tents to be turned with their faces towards it, in token of submission ; that the band might have their eye always upon their master's lodging, and be in readiness to assist him if he were attacked. In this manner did Ishmael dwell "in the presence,"—"before," (לְפָנַי) or, "over against the faces of all his brethren."^a

But the prediction embraced also the character and circumstances of his descendants. The manners and customs of the Arabians, except in the article of religion, have suffered almost no alteration, during the long period of three thousand years. They have occupied the same country, and followed the same mode of life, from the days of their great ancestor, down to the present times, and range the wide extent of burning sands which separate them from all the surrounding nations, as rude, and savage, and untractable as the wild ass himself. Claiming the barren plains of Arabia, as the patrimonial domain assigned by

^a Bochart. Hieroz. lib. iii, cap. 16, p. 878.

God to the founder of their nation, they consider themselves entitled to seize, and appropriate to their own use, whatever they can find there. Impatient of restraint, and jealous of their liberty, they form no connection with the neighbouring states; they admit of little or no friendly intercourse, but live in a state of continual hostility with the rest of the world. The tent is their dwelling, and the circular camp their city; the spontaneous produce of the soil, to which they sometimes add a little patch of corn, furnishes them with means of subsistence, amply sufficient for their moderate desires; and the liberty of ranging at pleasure their interminable wilds, fully compensates in their opinion for the want of all other accommodations. Mounted on their favourite horses, they scour the waste in search of plunder, with a velocity surpassed only by the wild ass. They levy contributions on every person that happens to fall in their way; and frequently rob their own countrymen, with as little ceremony as they do a stranger or an enemy: their hand is still against every man, and every man's hand against them. But they do not always confine their predatory excursions to the desert. When booty is scarce at home, they make incursions into the territories of their neighbours, and having robbed the solitary traveller, or plundered the caravan, immediately retire into the deserts far beyond the reach of their pursuers. Their character, drawn by the pen of inspiration, exactly corresponds with this view of their dispositions and conduct: "Behold, as wild asses in the desert, go they forth to their work, rising betimes for a prey: the wilderness yieldeth food for them and for their children."^r Savage and stubborn as the wild ass which

^r Job xxiv, 5.

inhabits the same wilderness, they go forth on the horse or the dromedary with inconceivable swiftness, in quest of their prey. Initiated in the trade of a robber from their earliest years, they know no other employment; they choose it as the business of their life, and prosecute it with unwearied activity. They start before the dawn, to invade the village or the caravan; make their attack with desperate courage, and surprising rapidity; and, plunging instantly into the desert, escape from the vengeance of their enemies. Provoked by their continual insults, the nations of ancient and modern times, have often invaded their country with powerful armies, determined to extirpate, or at least to subdue them to their yoke; but they always returned baffled and disappointed. The savage freebooters, disdaining every idea of submission, with invincible patience and resolution, maintained their independence; and they have transmitted it unimpaired to the present times. In spite of all their enemies can do to restrain them, they continue to dwell in the presence of all their brethren, and to assert their right to insult and plunder every one they meet with on the borders, or within the limits of their domains.

The last distinctive character of this animal, which the illustration of Scripture requires to be noted, is the violence of its lust, and the eagerness of the female to obey the impetuous call of nature.^s To restrain her is then impossible; but when her season is over, she returns of her own accord. Equally ungovernable was the propensity of God's ancient people, in the days of Jeremiah, to join with the heathen around them, in the grossest acts

^s Plin. Hist. Natur. lib. viii, cap. 30, p. 878.

of idolatrous worship. Promises and threatenings, mercies and judgments, were alike unavailing; they burst through every restraint, and when God sent his servants to seek and bring them back, they refused to return. More furious and unreasonable than the wild ass, which returns when her season is over to her former haunts, they felt no abatement of their madness, no inclination to relinquish the worship of idols, which could profit them nothing, for the service of the true God. "How canst thou say, I am not polluted, I have not gone after Baalim? See thy way in the valley, know what thou hast done. - - Thou art a wild ass used to the wilderness, that snuffeth up the wind at her pleasure; in her occasion who can turn her away? All they that seek her will not weary themselves; in her month," rather when her season is over, "they will find her."^t

The Hart.

The allusions to this animal in the sacred volume, though not numerous, are of considerable importance. Its name in Hebrew (אֵיל) Ail, is considered by Dr. Shaw as a generic word, including all the species of the deer kind; whether they are distinguished by round horns, as the stag; or by flat ones, as the fallow-deer; or by the smallness of the branches, as the roe.^u The term originally signified aid or assistance; and, in the progress of language, by a natural and easy transition, came to denote an animal furnished with the means of defence, but limited to horned animals, particularly the stag and the hind. This creature seems to resemble the goat, in being remarkably sure-footed, and delighting in elevated situations.

^t Jer. ii, 24.

^u Trav. vol. ii, p. 277.

The royal Psalmist alludes to both circumstances in one of his triumphant odes: "He maketh my feet like hind's feet, and setteth me upon my high places."^v He might also refer, in the first clause, to the uncommon solidity and hardness of its hoof, which Virgil compares to brass, which enables it to tread, with ease, the pointed rocks.^w It may seem, from the words of David, that the female possesses a surer foot and a harder hoof than the male, for he ascribes to himself the feet of the hind; but since natural historians have not remarked any difference between them, it is probable he was led to the choice from some other cause, which it may not be easy to discover. The prophet Habbakuk, in the close of his prayer, has the same allusion, and nearly in the same words: "He will make my feet like hind's feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places."^x While the Psalmist contents himself with referring merely to the firmness and security of his position, "he setteth me upon my high places," the prophet encourages himself with the persuasion, that his God would conduct him through every danger, with the same ease and safety as the hind walks among the cliffs of the rock.^y

To sureness of foot, the hind adds extraordinary swiftness. It bounds, with surprising agility, more than fifty feet;^z it is therefore with admirable propriety and force, the spouse compares the sudden manifestations of her Saviour's love and power, to the bounding of the hart on the summits of the mountains: "The voice of my beloved! behold he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping

^v Psa. xviii, 33.

^w Æneid. lib. vi, l. 802.

^x Hab. iii, 19.

^y Bochart. Hieroz. lib. iii, p. 879.

^z Varro de Re Rust. lib. ii, cap. 3.

upon the hills.”^a To give us some idea of the joy and triumph which his appearance in human nature, his resurrection from the dead, and the establishment of his kingdom in all its glory, should produce in the hearts of perishing sinners, the prophet Isaiah borrows the same figure: “Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing.”^b

The swiftness of this animal in running, is not less remarkable. Xenophon says, that the celerity of the young hart, when it is alarmed by the absence of its mother, is incomparable:

ΤΟΤΕ ΤΑΧΟΣ ὄδενι ΕΙΚΟΣ ΕΣΙ ΤΩΝ ΤΗΛΙΚΕΤΩΝ ΝΕΒΡΩΝ.

The rapidity with which the stag flies before the hunter, furnishes Virgil with this figure:

——— “*alia de parte patent*

Transmittunt cursu campos atque agmina cervi

Pulverulenta fuga glomerant, montesque relinquunt.”

Æneid. lib. iv. l. 153.

“On the other side, the stags scour along the open plains, and flying, thicken their mingled troops involved in clouds of dust, and forsake the mountains.”

This circumstance has not escaped the notice of the spouse, who addresses our Lord in these terms: “Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or a young hart, upon the mountains of spices.”^c

The hart, naturally of a hot and arid constitution, suffers much from thirst in the oriental regions. He therefore seeks the fountain or the stream with intense desire, particularly when his natural thirst has been aggravated by the pursuit of the hunter. Panting and braying, with eagerness he precipitates himself into the

^a Song ii, 8.

^b Isa. xxxv, 6.

^c Song viii, 14.

river, that he may quench at once the burning fever which consumes his vitals, in its cooling waters.^d No circumstance can display more forcibly the ardent breathings of divine love in the soul of a true believer; and the holy Psalmist has availed himself of it with admirable propriety and effect, in the description of his religious feelings, when exiled from the house of God, and a dejected wanderer near the sources of the Jordan: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" Thus importunate are the desires of the genuine saint, thus earnestly he longs after communion with his God; he feels impatient at a distance from the sanctuary, and finds it impossible to be satisfied with any enjoyment beneath the sensible manifestations of his Redeemer's favour.

The name of the female is inscribed in the title of the twenty-second Psalm: "To the chief musician upon Aijeleth Shahar, or the hind of the morning." These words have greatly divided the sentiments of commentators; and will probably continue to do so, till we obtain a deeper insight into the mysteries of revelation, than is intended for the present state of our being. The Jewish writers, who have been followed by many of the Greek fathers, consider them as a metaphor intended to express the early assistance which the circumstances of our Saviour required: and render them, "For obtaining speedy assistance." But, in the Sacred Scriptures, the original term Aijeleth and its plural, is so uniformly employed to denote the hind or female deer, that the literal meaning of the phrase ought undoubtedly to be preferred. Bochart, interpreting the

^d Bochart. Hieroz. lib. iii, cap. 4, p. 885.

words literally, seems inclined to the opinion, that this psalm is entitled, *The hind of the morning*; because it is composed in the measure of a sacred ode, then well known among the Jews, which began with these words, and was meant to be sung to the same tune. Besides, the character in the text is properly given to the hind, because she starts with the dawn, suckles her young, and prepares their place where they are to rest through the day, after which, she takes her station at a little distance, and watches over their slumbers. Others, with more probability, think the royal Psalmist refers to his Son and Lord, whose sufferings he describes; who, in the eighth chapter of the Song, is compared to the swift hind upon the mountains of spices, as Naphtali had been long before, to a hind let loose. Like the hind of the morning, that shakes off her slumbers with the earliest dawn, to suckle and guard her young one at the risk of her life,—the Saviour appointed from eternity the deliverer of his people, came forth immediately after the fall, to commence the work of our salvation; and when the fulness of time was come, appeared in our nature to finish it in his sufferings and death: “Then the dogs compassed him, the assembly of the wicked inclosed him; they pierced his hands and his feet.”

It is well known that the hind goes with young eight months, and brings forth her fawn in the beginning of autumn.^e Why then does Jehovah address these interrogations to Job: “Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth? Or canst thou mark when the hinds do calve? Canst thou number the months that they fulfil? Or knowest thou the time when they bring forth.”^f Could Job be ignorant of circumstances

^e Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. iv, p. 86.

^f Job xxxix, 1.

which were obvious to all the shepherds in the east, who had numerous opportunities of observing the habits and manners of these creatures? It is obvious, that Jehovah could not refer to the mere speculative knowledge of these facts, but to that which is proper to himself, by which he not only knows, but also directs and governs all things. This is confirmed by the use of the verb (שמר) *shamar*, which signifies to observe, to keep, or to guard: Knowest thou the time when the wild goats bring forth, the parturition of the hinds dost thou guard? Without the protecting care of God, who upholds all his works by the word of his power, the whole race of these timid creatures would soon be destroyed by the violence of wild beasts, or the arts of the hunter. It is with great propriety, says one of the ancients, that Jehovah demands, “The birth of the hinds dost thou guard?” for, since this animal is always in flight, and with fear and terror always leaping and skipping about, she could never bring her young to maturity without such a special protection. The providence of God, therefore, is equally conspicuous in the preservation of the mother and the fawn; both are the objects of his compassion and tender care; and consequently, that afflicted man had no reason to charge his Maker with unkindness, who condescends to watch over the goats and the hinds.

It seems to be generally admitted, that the hind brings forth her young with great difficulty; and, so much appears to be suggested in the third verse of the same chapter: “They bow themselves, they bring forth their young ones, they cast out their sorrows.” But if Pliny, and other natural historians, are worthy of credit, divine providence has been graciously pleased to provide certain

herbs, which greatly facilitate the birth ; and by an unerring instinct, he directs the hind to feed upon them, when the time of gestation draws towards a close.^g Whatever be in this assertion, we know from higher authority, that providence does promote the parturition of the hind, by awakening her fears, and agitating her frame by the rolling thunder ; “ The voice of Jehovah, (a common Hebrew phrase, denoting thunder,) maketh the hinds to calve.”ⁿ Nor ought we to wonder, that so timorous a creature as the hind, should be so much affected by that awfully imposing sound, when some of the proudest men that ever existed, have been made to tremble. Augustus the Roman emperor, according to Suetonius, was so terrified when it thundered, that he wrapped a seal skin round his body, with the view of defending it from the lightning, and concealed himself in some secret corner till the tempest ceased. The tyrant Caligula, who, sometimes affected to threaten Jupiter himself, covered his head, or hid himself under a bed ;ⁱ and Horace confesses, he was reclaimed from atheism by the terror of thunder and lightning, the effects of which he describes with his usual felicity :

“ Quo bruta tellus, et vaga flumina

Quo Styx et invisi horrida Tænari

Sedes, Atlanteusque finis

Concutitur.” —

B. i, Ode 34.

But the hind has no sooner brought forth her fawn, than the pain she suffered is forgotten: “ They bow themselves” to bring forth their young ones, “ they cast out their sor-

^g Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. viii, cap. 50. See also Cicero de Natura Deorum, lib. ii. Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. xii, cap. 35.

ⁿ Psa. xxix, 9. ⁱ Page 89, Amstelodami, 1668. Caligula, p. 165.

rows." These words must forcibly remind the reader of the maternal pains and joys of a higher order of beings : " A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come : but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world."^j It is added, " Their young ones are in good liking, they grow up with corn ; they go forth, and return not unto them."^k Though they are brought forth in sorrow, and have no human owner to provide for their wants, and to guard them from danger, yet, after being suckled a while, they become vigorous and active, and shift for themselves in the open fields. They grow up with corn, says our translation ; but the fawn is not commonly fed in the corn field, because it lives in the deserts, and frequents those places which are far remote from the cultivated field. Besides, in Arabia, where Job flourished, the harvest is reaped in the months of March and April, long before the hinds bring forth their young. The fawn, therefore, does not thrive with corn, but with the few shrubs and hardy plants which grow in the wilderness or open country. But the inspired writer has committed no mistake ; the original phrase is capable of another translation, which perfectly corresponds with the condition of that animal in those parts of the world. In Chaldee, the word (בבר) babar, or (בברא) babara, is evidently the same as the Hebrew (בחויץ) bahouts. Thus in Laban's address to Jacob, when he arrived in Padan-aram, " Why standest thou without," the Hebrew word is (בחויץ) bahouts ; and in Jonathan and Onkelos it is (בברא) babara. The same remark applies to a text in the book of Exodus : " If he rise again and walk abroad

^j John xvi, 21.^k Job xxxix, 4.

upon his staff; in Hebrew (בַּחוּץ) bahouts; in Chaldee, (בַּבְּרָא) babara.¹ Hence, the phrase may be translated, They grow up without, or in the open field. Many other instances might be specified, but these are sufficient to establish the justice of the remark. Even the Hebrew phrase itself, is translated by Schultens, “in the open field,” which is indisputably the sense of the passage under consideration. Thus, when the fawn is calved, it grows up in the desert, under the watchful providence of God; it soon forsakes the spot where it was brought forth, and suckled by the dam, and returns no more.

Some ancient writers allege, that the hind bestows much pains in rearing and instructing her young. She carefully hides her fawn in the thicket, or among the long grass, and corrects it with her foot, when it discovers an inclination prematurely to leave its covert. When it has acquired sufficient strength, she teaches it to run, and to bound from one rock to another; till, conscious of its ability to provide for itself, it bends its rapid course into the boundless waste, and from that moment, loses the recollection of its parent and her tender care.

But affectionate as is the hind to her young one, and attentive to its safety and instruction, circumstances occur at times, which diminish, which even extinguish the benignity of her nature, and render her insensible to the sufferings of her own offspring. The slightness of her connection with guilty man, and her distance from his dwelling, do not prevent her from sharing in the calamities to which all sublunary natures are subjected on account of his sin. The grievous famine which dims the fine eye of the wild ass, and compels her to take refuge

¹ Gen. xxiv, 31. Exod. xxi, 19.

on the summits of the mountains, where, sucking in the cooling breeze instead of water, which is no longer to be found, she lingers out a few miserable days, hardens the gentle and affectionate heart of the hind, that she forsakes her fawn in the open field, because there is no grass, without making a single effort to preserve its existence:^m She forsakes it when it is newly calved, when her natural affection is commonly strongest, and when it needs most her fostering care; she forsakes it in the desert, where it must soon perish of hunger; deaf to its cries, and indifferent to its sufferings, she leaves it in search of somewhat to prolong her own wretched existence. At such a failure of the kindest affections in the heart of a loving hind, we shall not be surprised, when the dreadful effects of severe famine on the human mind are considered. The prediction of Moses was completely fulfilled: “Thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons, and of thy daughters, which the Lord thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee.”—“The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground, for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter, and toward the young one that cometh out from between her feet, and toward her children which she shall bear; for she shall eat them for want of all things, secretly, in the siege and straitness.”ⁿ

The hart being a ruminating animal,^o and one that divides the hoof, was classed by the law of Moses among

^m Jer. xiv, 5.

ⁿ Deut. xxviii, 53.

^o Plin. Hist. Natur. lib. x, cap. 73.

the clean beasts, and the use of its flesh recommended to the chosen people : “ Even as the roe-buck and the hart is eaten, so thou shalt eat them : the unclean and the clean, shall eat of them alike.”^p In a succeeding chapter, it is expressly mentioned as one of the clean animals, the flesh of which, the people of Israel were permitted to use : “ These are the beasts that ye shall eat - - - the hart, and the roe-buck, and the fallow deer.” This permission was a great advantage to the Israelites ; for the lofty mountains of Syria, Amana, Lebanon, and Carmel, swarmed with these animals,^r which, descending into the plains to graze in the cultivated fields, invited them to the healthful exercise of the chase, and supplied their tables with a species of food, equally abundant and agreeable.

The dying patriarch in his farewell benediction, compares his son Naphtali to “ a hind let loose ;”^s the sense of which is difficult and obscure. The most probable opinion is the one which has been generally received ; that this tribe, like their immediate founder, were to be more distinguished by the gentleness of their manners, their love of peace, and their eloquence, than by their skill in arms. Bochart, in attempting to explain this passage, proposes to reject the points, to place the Hebrew term (אֵילָה) *ayala* in the state of regimine, by changing the *hay* into *thau*, to change the participle into a substantive noun, by inserting a *vau*, and alter the character of (אִמְרֵי) *imre*, by inserting a *yod* between the *mem* and the *resh*. By these changes in the text, our learned author elicits a very different sense : Naphtali is a spreading tree which sendeth forth beautiful branches. But if such

^p Deut. xii, 15.

^r Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. v, *in fine*.

^q Ch. xiv, 4.

^s Gen. xlix, 21.

a mode of criticism were admitted, the sacred Scriptures might be made to speak any thing an interpreter chose ; and by consequence, they would be rendered entirely useless as a rule of faith and practice. No book whatever, ancient or modern, could preserve the meaning of the author, and maintain its character, under such unwarrantable treatment. Add to this, that a comparison of the same kind, and almost in the same words as Bochart proposes, immediately follows, which but ill accords with the beautiful variety for which the other parts of the address are so remarkable. Such a tame and meagre repetition, it is presumed, is no where else to be found in the sacred volume, and ought not to be admitted in this passage, without the most cogent proof of its being the dictate of inspiration.^s

But if the benediction of Jacob is difficult and obscure, the meaning of Solomon's recommendation is clear and precise : " Rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe ;"^t the hind of loves, and the roe of grace, in the language of ancient Hebrews mean, the aimable hind and the lovely roe. These creatures, it is generally admitted, in the whole form of their bodies, and in all their dispositions and manners, are wonderfully pleasing. The ancients were particularly delighted with them ; they kept them in their houses ; they fed them at their tables with the greatest care ; they washed, and combed, and adorned them with garlands of flowers, and chains of gold or silver.^u This custom seems

^s Bochart. Hieroz. lib. iii, cap. 18, p. 897.

^t Prov. v, 18, 19.

^u Theocrit. Idyll. 11. *τρεφω δε τοι ενδεκα νεβρως,*

Πασας μαννοφορας.——

" I rear for thee eleven fawns, all of them adorned with chains of gold."

to have been very general in the east; for in Virgil, Sylvia performed all these kind offices to her favourite stag :

“ Cervus erat forma præstanti et cornibus ingens

Assuetum imperiis soror omni Sylvia cura

Molibus intexens ornabat cornua sertis.

Patebatque foram, puroque in fonte lavabat.” *Æn.* lib. vii, l. 483.

The lamb and the kid were treated with still greater familiarity, as we learn from the parable of Nathan, which, by the command of Jehovah, he uttered in the presence of David : “ But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up ; and it grew up together with him, and with his children ; it did eat of his own meat, and drink of his own cup, and lay in his own bosom, and was unto him as a daughter.”^v The hind seems to have been admitted to all those privileges, except that of reposing with her master on the same couch, which must have been rendered inconvenient by the largeness of her size. If these things are duly considered, the charge of the wise man will not appear so singular ; to the ear of an oriental it was quite intelligible, and perfectly proper. Let a man tenderly love his spouse ; relax in her company from the severer duties of life ; take pleasure in her innocent and amiable conversation ; and in fine, treat her with all the kindness, and admit her to all the familiarity, which the beauty of her form, the excellence of her dispositions, and the nearness of her relation, entitle her to expect.

It has been the custom in all ages, to entreat or adjure by those things which are known to be peculiarly dear to the person addressed. Thus, unhappy Dido besought Æneas to remain,

^v 2 Sam. xii, 3.

— “ per ego has lacrymas dextramque tuam, te,
 (Quando aliud mihi jam miseræ nihil ipsa reliqui)
 Per connubia nostra, per inceptos hymenæos ;
 Si bene quid de te merui, fuit aut tibi quidquam
 Dulce meum miserere domus labentes.” *Æneid.* lib. iv, l. 314.

In the same manner, the spouse avails herself of the great delight which the daughters of Israel were known to take in the roes and the hinds, in her charge not to disturb the repose of her beloved : “ I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love till he please.”^w She repeats her charge in the next chapter, in precisely the same terms : for those that experience the sweetness of communion with Christ, and the sensible manifestations of his love, cannot but earnestly desire the continuance of such inestimable favours, and be solicitous that nothing be done either by themselves or others, to grieve his holy Spirit, and to provoke him to withdraw.

The Ibez, or Wild goat.

This animal belongs to the same species with the domestic goat, and exhibits nearly the same character and dispositions. His Hebrew name, Yaala, from a verb which signifies to ascend, indicates one of the strongest habits implanted in his nature, to scale the loftiest pinnacle of the rock, and the highest ridge of the mountains. He takes his station on the edge of the steep, and seems to delight in gazing on the gulf below, or surveying the immense void before him. Those frightful precipices which are inaccessible to man, and other animals, where the most adventurous hunter dares not follow him, are his favourite haunts. He sleeps on their brow ; he sports on their

^w Song ii, 7.

smallest projections, secure from the attack of his enemies. These facts were observed by the shepherds of the east, recorded by the pen of inspiration, and celebrated in the songs of Zion: "The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats." In the expostulation which Jehovah addressed to Job, they are called "the wild goats of the rock;" because it is the place which the Creator has appointed for their proper abode, and to which he has adapted all their dispositions and habits. The dreary and frightful precipices, which frown over the Dead sea, toward the wilderness of Engedi, the inspired historian of David's life, calls emphatically "the rocks of the wild goats," as if accessible only to those animals.

The ibex is distinguished by the size of his horns. No creature, says Gesner, has horns so large as those of the mountain goat, for they reach from his head as far as his buttocks. Long before his time, Pliny remarked, that the ibex is a creature of wonderful swiftness, although its head is loaded with vast horns. According to Scaliger, the horns of an elderly goat are sometimes eighteen pounds weight, and marked by twenty-four circular prominences, the indications of as many years.^x

The horns of the ibex, according to the Chaldee interpreter, are mentioned by the prophet among the valuable commodities which enriched the merchants of Tyre, in the days of her prosperity: "The men of Dedan were thy merchants; many isles were the merchandise of thine hand; they brought thee for a present, horns of ivory and ebony."^y It is certain, that the horns of this animal were greatly esteemed among the ancients, on account of the various useful purposes to which they were converted. The Cre-

^x Bochart. Hieroz. lib. iii, cap. 23, p. 915.

^y Ezek. xxvii, 15.

tan archers had them manufactured into bows; and the votaries of Bacchus, into large cups, one of which, says Ælian, could easily hold three measures.^z The conjecture of Bochart is therefore extremely probable, that the *Ἰξάλος* of Homer, is the ibex of the Latins; for he calls it a wild goat, says that it was taken among the rocks, and had horns of sixteen palms, of which the bow of Pandarus was fabricated:

Αὐτικ' εἰσὺλα τὸ ζῶν ἐν ὄρεσιν, Ἰξάλου αἰγός

Αγρίε. —

Iliad. lib. iv, l. 105.

We may conclude from the wisdom and goodness of God, which shine conspicuously in all his works, that the enormous horns of the ibex, are not a useless incumbrance, but, in some respects, necessary to its safety and comfort. The Arabian writers aver, that when it sees the hunter approach the top of the rock, where it happens to have taken its station, and has no other way of escape, turning on its back, it throws itself down the precipice, at once defended by its long bending horns from the projections of the rock, and saved from being dashed in pieces, or even hurt by the fall. The opinion of Pliny is more worthy of credit, that the horns of the ibex serve as a poise to its body in its perilous excursions among the precipitous rocks, or when it attempts to leap from one crag to another.^a The feats which it is said to perform among the Alpine summits, are almost incredible; one fact, however, seems to be certain, that in bounding from one height to another, it far surpasses all the other varieties of the species. To hunt the ibex, has been justly reckoned a most perilous enterprise,^b which frequently terminates in the hunter's destruc-

^z De Nat. Animal. lib. xiv, cap. 16.

^a Nat. Hist. lib. viii, c. 76.

^b Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. vi, p. 385.

tion. These facts place in a very strong light, the extreme dangers which at one time compelled David to seek a refuge from the pursuit of his infatuated father-in-law, among the rocks of the wild goats; and, at the same time, the bitter and implacable spirit which prompted Saul to follow him into places so full of peril.

The wild goat seems to have been generally reckoned a beautiful creature by the ancient Israelites, and other eastern nations; for the wise man in one of his Proverbs, mentions it with the hind, as an object of esteem and attachment: "Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe."^c The original term, in the close of the quotation, is the same which in other places is rendered the ibex, or wild goat, which it properly signifies. The ibex is finely shaped, graceful in its motions, and amiable in its manners. The female is particularly celebrated by some natural historians, for tender affection to her young, and the incessant vigilance with which she watches over their safety. To these circumstances the wise man doubtless referred; and they sufficiently account for the regard which the ancients had for this animal, and the notice with which it is honoured by the royal teacher.

The Antelope.

The name of the antelope in the Hebrew Scripture, is (צבי) Tsebi; and in the version of the Seventy (Δορκας) Dorcas. In our version, the original term is translated roe and roebuck; but Dr. Shaw, and others, have proved by several conclusive arguments, that it is not the roe, but the antelope, which the sacred writers intend.^d The former is extremely rare in the oriental regions, while the latter is common in every part of the Levant. But is it to

^c Prov. v, 19. ^d Trav. vol. ii, p. 277.

be supposed, that the sacred writers would borrow their figures from creatures which are either not known at all in Palestine and the surrounding countries, or but rarely seen; while they had not even a name for an animal, which, in large herds of several thousands, fed in their fields, and around their dwellings? Such a supposition would contradict some of the strongest laws which regulate the operations of the human mind, and is therefore quite inadmissible. It is equally absurd to suppose that the Jewish legislator, when he regulated by fixed laws the food of his people, would mention a creature which they probably had never seen, of which perhaps they had not even heard, which was not to be found in the deserts over which they had to travel, nor in the country they were to possess; while he omitted one of daily occurrence, which was found every where, in the wilderness and in the cultivated field, on the mountains and in the plains; whose flesh was greatly esteemed, and, by consequence, could not fail to become an important article of subsistence. These considerations are of themselves sufficient to establish the superior claims of the antelope to a place in the sacred volume.

The arguments which have been drawn from the etymological meaning of the Hebrew terms צב, and צבי, and the authority of the Septuagint, although of inferior importance, are not destitute of weight. The first of these names suggests the idea of a very gregarious animal; but this is not the character of the roes, for, instead of associating in herds, they live in separate families; while the antelopes are commonly found in very large herds, sometimes to the number of two or three thousand together.^f The second term צבי, primarily signifies beauty; and when

^f Russel's Hist. of Aleppo, vol. ii, p. 153.

put for the concrete, as in this instance, by a very common figure of speech in Hebrew, has the force of a superlative, and signifies a thing or animal of uncommon beauty. Thus the land of Canaan is, in the prophet, styled אֶרֶץ הַצְּבִי, the land of beauty; or, as it is rendered by our translators, the glory of all lands.^g The tsebi, therefore, is an animal that excels in beauty; which exactly corresponds with all the accounts that natural historians have given us of the antelope. Both the roe and the antelope, it must be admitted, are, in the general opinion of mankind, very beautiful animals; but the preference is commonly given to the latter. Buffon says, the figure of the small antelopes is elegant, and their members are finely proportioned to their size; and make prodigious bounds.^h

The Septuagint uniformly translate the terms, צִבְיָה and צִבִּי, by *δορκας*; and the correctness of their translation is attested by Luke, for he mentions “a certain disciple” who resided “at Joppa, named Tabitha, which, by interpretation, is called Dorcas.” The name Tabitha is formed by a slight alteration from the Chaldee noun (טַבִּיָּא) Tabia, and this from the Hebrew term (צִבִּי) tsebi. The Hebrew term signifies, as has been already observed, a creature of surpassing beauty; Dorcas, its divinely attested equivalent, limiting somewhat the general signification, denotes a creature remarkable for the fineness of its eyes; and from this last circumstance, it is conjectured that Tabitha received her name. But while the eyes of the roe have attracted no particular attention, so far as the writer has observed, the antelope has been celebrated for the fineness of its eyes in all the countries of the east. Their beauty, according to Dr. Shaw, is proverbial there to this day; and

^g Ezek. xx, 6, 15.

^h Nat. Hist. vol. vii, p. 26.

it is still the greatest compliment which, in these countries, can be paid to a fine woman, to say, "You have the eyes of an antelope."ⁱ From Bochart, and other authors, we learn that it was equally celebrated by the ancients for the acuteness of its vision; its eyes, they pretend, never become bleared; it sees in the dark; it sleeps with both eyes open, or, as others will have it, with one eye open and another shut.^j These circumstances appear to be much more applicable to the antelope, which is a quadruped well known, than to the roe, which is either not known at all, or very rare, in those parts of the world.

The natives of Syria, make a distinction between the antelopes of the mountain, and those of the plain. Dr. Russel, who gives us this information, says, "the former is the most beautifully formed, its back and sides are of a dark brown colour, and it bounds with surprising agility; the latter is of a much lighter colour, its limbs are not so cleanly turned, and it is neither so strong, nor so active; both, however, are so fleet, that the grey-hounds, though reckoned excellent, cannot, without the aid of the falcon, come up with them, except in soft deep ground."^k This is probably the reason, that the sacred writers frequently mention the "antelope upon the mountains," and not simply the antelope, when they allude to surpassing beauty of form, or amazing rapidity of motion.

The swiftness of this beautiful creature, has been celebrated by writers of every age, in terms of high admiration. Its exquisite symmetry, its active form, and the

ⁱ Encyc. Britan. Shaw's Trav. vol. ii, p. 278. Niebuhr's Trav. vol. i, p. 131. Morier's Trav. vol. i, p. 206. Forbes's Orient. Mem. vol. iii, p. 97.

^j Bochart. Hieroz. lib. iii, p. 924.

^k Hist. of Aleppo, vol. ii, p. 150.

delicate turn of its limbs, clearly shew, that it is intended by its Maker, to hold a distinguished place among the fleetest animals that scour the desert. Sir John Malcom says, it may be termed the fleetest of quadrupeds.¹ It seems rather to vanish, than to run from the pursuer, and when closely pressed, bounds with so great agility, that it hardly seems to touch the ground in its career. Oppian calls it the swiftest species of goat; and according to Ælian, it equals the whirlwind in speed.^m He outruns the antelope, said the Arabians, when they wished to pay the highest compliment to the youthful warrior. To this trait in its character, the sacred writers often allude. The surprising agility which Asahel, the brother of Joab, displayed in his pursuit of Abner, drew this eulogium from the sacred historian: "And Asahel was light of foot, as one of the antelopes that are in the field."ⁿ Another allusion to the amazing speed of that animal, occurs in the description of the warlike qualifications, which distinguished a troop of Gadites in the service of David: "They were men of might, men of war, fit for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and were as swift as the roes (the antelopes) upon the mountains."^o

In the Song of Solomon, the spouse more than once, compares her beloved to the antelope, particularly alluding to the wonderful elasticity of its limbs, and the velocity with which, by a few leaps, it scales the loftiest precipice, or bounds from one cliff to another. Waiting with

¹ Malcom's Hist. of Persia, vol. ii, p. 551.

^m De Nat. Animal. lib. xiv, cap. 14. Hanway, in his Travels, says it is as fleet as a bird, and leaves the swiftest horse far behind. Part iii, chap. 35, vol. i, p. 159.

ⁿ 2 Sam. ii, 18.

^o 1 Chron. xii, 8.

eager expectation his promised coming, she hears him at last speaking peace and comfort to her soul; and instantly describes him as hastening in the ardour of his love to her relief, and surmounting with ease, every obstruction in his way: “The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. My beloved is like a roe, (an antelope) or a young hart,”^p hasting with inconceivable activity and swiftness to my relief. In allusion to the same property, she entreats him speedily to return, and revive her drooping soul with the gracious intimations of his love: “Turn, my beloved, and be thou like (an antelope), or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether.”^q Leave me solitary and mournful no longer; haste with the alacrity and speed of an antelope; lightly bound over those mountains, which separate us far from each other, and prevent our intercourse. The mutual endearments of Christ and his church, in that inspired Song, are closed with a similar invitation: “Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to (an antelope), or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices,”^r—that bounds among the mountains, where it feeds on the fragrant herbs which adorn and enrich their declivities, and is excited to greater activity by their pungent odours. Haste from the ineffable delights “of the everlasting mountains, and perpetual hills” of heaven, to the inferior, but exhilarating pleasures of grace and mercy below.

The antelope, like the hind, with which it is so frequently associated in Scripture, is a timid creature, extremely jealous and watchful, sleeps little, is easily disturbed, takes alarm on the slightest occasion; and the moment its fears are awakened, it flies, or seems rather to

^p Song ii, 8, 9.

^q Verse 17.

^r Ch. viii, 14.

disappear from the sight of the intruder.^s Soft and cautious is the step which interrupts not the light slumbers of this gentle and suspicious creature. It is probable from some hints in the sacred volume, that the shepherd in the eastern desert, sometimes wished to beguile the tedious moments, by contemplating the beautiful form of the sleeping antelope. But this was a gratification he could not hope to enjoy, unless he approached it with the utmost care, and maintained a profound silence. When, therefore, an oriental charged his companion by the antelope, not to disturb the repose of another, he intimated, by a most expressive and beautiful allusion, the necessity of using the greatest circumspection. This statement imparts a great degree of clearness and energy, to the solemn adjuration, which the spouse twice addresses to the daughters of Jerusalem, when she charged them not to disturb the repose of her beloved: "I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes (the antelopes) and the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love till he please."^t In this language, which is pastoral, and equally beautiful and significant, the spouse delicately intimates her anxiety to detain her Lord, that she may enjoy the happiness of contemplating his glory; her deep sense of the evil nature and bitter consequences of sin; her apprehension, lest her companions, the members of her family, should by some rash and unholy deed, provoke him to depart; and how reasonable it was, that they who coveted the society of that beautiful creature, and were accustomed to watch over its slumbers in guarded silence, should be equally cautious, not to disturb the communion which she then enjoyed with her Saviour.

^s Bochart. Hieroz. lib. iii, c. 26, p. 928.

^t Song ii, 7, and iii, 5.

To hunt the antelope, is a favourite amusement in the east ; but which, from its extraordinary swiftness, is attended with great difficulty. On the first alarm, it flies like an arrow from the bow, and leaves the best mounted hunter, and the fleetest dog, far behind. Sparman says that in Africa the antelope when pursued, often stands still and gazes at the hunter and waits for his coming up, when it shoots away and vanishes from his view.^u “The grey-hound,” says the compilers of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, “the fleetest of dogs, is unequal in the course ; and the sportsman is obliged to call in the aid of the falcon, trained to the work, to seize on the animal, and impede its motions, to give the dogs time to overtake it.” Dr. Russel, in his history of Aleppo, thus describes the chase of the antelope : “They permit horsemen, without dogs, if they advance gently, to approach near, and do not seem much to regard a caravan that passes within a little distance : but the moment they take the alarm, they bound away, casting from time to time, a look behind ; and if they find themselves pursued, they lay their horns backward, almost close on the shoulders, and flee with incredible swiftness. When dogs appear, they instantly take alarm ; for which reason, the sportsmen endeavour to steal upon the antelope unawares, to get as near as possible before slipping the dogs, and then pushing on full speed, they throw off the falcon, which, being taught to strike or fix upon the cheek of the game, retards its course by repeated attacks, till the grey-hounds have time to get up. The diversion is noble, but the sportsman must ride hard, who expects to be in at the death.”^v

^u Voy. vol. i, chap. 4, p. 131.

^v Hist. of Aleppo, vol. ii, p. 153. See also *Ælian de Nat. An.* lib. xii, c. 46.

This statement furnishes a beautiful illustration of that prophecy, in which Isaiah describes the terror that overwhelmed the inhabitants of Babylon, and the rapidity of their flight, when the Medes and Persians forced their way into the city. “It shall be like a chased (antelope,) and as a sheep that no man taketh up; they shall every man turn to his own people, and flee every one into his own land.”^w

Before dogs were so generally employed, the hunters were obliged to make use of nets and snares, to entangle the game. When the antelope finds itself enclosed in the toils, terror lends it additional strength and activity; it strains every nerve, with vigorous and incessant exertion to break the snare, and escape before the pursuer arrives.^x And such is the conduct which the wise man recommends to him who has rashly engaged to be surety for his neighbour: “Deliver thyself as (an antelope) from the hand of the hunter, and as a bird from the hand of the fowler.”^y The snare is spread, the adversary is at hand, instantly exert all thy powers to obtain a discharge of the obligation; a moment’s hesitation may involve thee and thy family in irretrievable ruin.

The only other allusion to the antelope, deserving of notice, occurs in the Song, which is so well illustrated by Dr. Peddie in his papers on sacred Zoology, that I cannot do better than transcribe his words: “They often pro-

^w Isa. xiii, 14.

^x Bochart. Hieroz. lib. iii, cap. 26, p. 927.—The ancient sportsman sometimes endeavoured to enclose his game with lines on which he had bound feathers of various colours, which fill the timid creatures with so great terror that they know not where to seek for safety, till, in utter despair, they rush into the nets and perish. Geor. lib. iii, l. 372. Æneid. lib. xii, l. 750. Lucan, lib. iv, l. 437.

^y Prov. vi, 5.

duce twins; and the beautiful appearance of a pair of twin gazels, or young antelopes, whose horns are not yet grown, and who feed together in a rich pasture, where the little creatures are almost overtopped by the lilies, and other wild flowers, which enamel the field, their dark brown shoulders only being visible, seems to have occasioned the similitude in two places of the Song of Solomon, where the spouse's beauty is described as conformed to the image of Christ, and adorned with the graces of his Spirit: "Thy two breasts are like two young (antelopes) that are twins, which feed among the lilies."^z

The flesh of this animal is very grateful to the taste of an oriental. It is, in the estimation of Arabian writers, the most delicious and wholesome of all venison. They pronounce its juices better than those of any other wild animal, and more adapted to the human constitution. The sentiments of these venerable ancients, are confirmed by the testimony of several intelligent modern authors. Dr. Shaw says, "it is in great esteem in the east for food, having a sweet musky taste, which is highly agreeable to their palates;"^a and according to Dr. Russel, "the antelope venison, during the winter, or sporting season, is well flavoured, but very lean, and in the spring is fat, and of a flavour which might vie with English venison."^b These statements account for its being daily served up on the sumptuous table of Solomon and other eastern princes."^c

Besides, the antelope has all the marks which distinguished clean animals under the law; it both divides the hoof and chews the cud. An Israelite, therefore, might

^z Song iv, 5, and vii, 3. Christ. Mag. vol. vi.—Antelope.

^a Trav. vol. ii, p. 279.

^b Hist. of Aleppo, vol. ii, p. 154.

^c 1 Kings iv, 23.

lawfully eat of its flesh, although he was not permitted to offer it in sacrifice. This creature belonged to the class of clean beasts, which the people of Israel, as well during their wanderings in the desert, as after their settlement in the land of promise, were permitted to kill wherever they could find them, and use for the subsistence of their families, although, at the time, they might be ceremonially unclean. But the ox, the sheep, and the goat, which some writers distinguish by the name of clean cattle, might both be lawfully eaten and offered in sacrifice; yet while the chosen people sojourned in the wilderness, they were forbidden to kill any of these animals, although intended merely for private use, except at the door of the tabernacle; and if ceremonially unclean, even to eat of their flesh. This regulation occasioned little inconvenience to the tribes in the desert, where they lived in one vast encampment, in the midst of which the sacred tent was pitched; but after their settlement in Canaan, their circumstances required either an alteration in the law, or that the greater part of the nation should abstain altogether from the use of flesh. The permission was accordingly enlarged; while they were still restricted to shed the blood of cattle intended for sacrifice, only before the national altar, they were permitted, when too far from the tabernacle, to kill those which they designed merely for common food, in any of their cities, or in their own houses; even the ceremonial regulation was abolished, and in private clean and unclean fared alike. This permission, which is couched in very express terms, is repeated in the course of a few verses, lest the suspicious mind of an Israelite might suppose that Jehovah envied his people the enjoyment of what he had given them; and “in both instances it is illustrated by an example which must, from the use of it,

have been familiar to the Israelites :” “ The unclean and the clean may eat thereof, as of the (antelope), and as of the hart.”^c

The Unicorn.

The name of this animal in the Hebrew text is (רִמ) rim, or (רֵמ) reem ; and is derived from a verb, which signifies to be exalted or lifted up. This term, which in Hebrew signifies only height, is rendered by the Greek interpreters μονοκερος, and by the Latins unicornis ; both which answer to our English word unicorn. Jerome and others, doubtful to what animal it belongs, render it sometimes rhinoceros, and sometimes unicorn.^d It is evident from the sacred Scriptures, that the reem is an animal of considerable height, and of great strength. Thus Balaam reluctantly declared concerning Israel : “ God brought them out of Egypt ; he hath as it were the strength of (a reem) an unicorn.”^e So great in the estimation of that reluctant seer, was the strength of the reem, that he repeats the eulogium in the very same words in the next chapter.^f From the grateful ascriptions of David, we learn that it is a horned animal : “ But my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn.”^g And Moses, in his benediction of Joseph, states a most important fact, that it has two horns ; the words are : His horns are like the horns of (רֵמ a reem, in the singular number,) an unicorn. Some interpreters, determined to support the claims of the unicorn to the honour of a place in the sacred volume, contend, that in this instance, the singular, by an enallage or change of number, is put for the plural. But

^c Deut. xii, 13-16, and 20-23.

^d Bochart. Hieroz. lib. iii, cap. 26, p. 930.

^e Num. xxiii, 22.

^f Verse 8.

^g Ps. xcii, 10.

this is a gratuitous assertion ; and besides, if admitted, would greatly diminish the force and propriety of the comparison. The two sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, had been adopted into the family of Jacob, and appointed the founders of two distinct tribes, whose descendants in the times of Moses were become numerous and respectable in the congregation. These were the two horns with which Joseph was to attack and subdue his enemies ; and by consequence, propriety required an allusion to a creature, not with one, but with two horns.

In the book of Job, the reem is represented as a very fierce and intractable animal, which, although possessed of sufficient strength to labour, sternly and pertinaciously refuses to bend his neck to the yoke : “ Will the unicorn (in Hebrew the reem) be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib ? Canst thou bind the reem with his band in the furrow, or will he harrow the valleys after thee ? Wilt thou trust him because his strength is great ? Or wilt thou leave thy labour to him ? Wilt thou believe him that he will bring home thy seed, and gather it into thy barn ? ” So far from being disposed to submit to the dominion of man, he is extremely hostile and dangerous. Little inferior to the lion himself in strength and fury, he is sometimes associated in Scripture with that destroyer. “ Save me,” cried our Lord to his Father, “ save me from the lion’s mouth : for thou hast heard me from the horns of (רַאמִיִּם) the unicorns.”^h In the prophecies of Isaiah, it is united with other powerful animals, to symbolize the great leaders and princes of the hostile nations, that laid waste his native land : “ And the unicorns shall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls :

^h Psa. xxii, 21.

and their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness.”ⁱ Such are the general characters of the reem, as delineated in the sacred volume: but besides these, several hints are given, which seem to point out, with no little certainty, the genus under which the reem ought to be classed. In that sublime composition, where the psalmist assigns the reasons why God is to be honoured, he joins the calf with the young reem, and ascribes to them the same kind of movement: “He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young (reem, or) unicorn.”^j The prophet Isaiah, in a passage already quoted, classes him with the bullocks and the bulls; and Moses assigns him the same station, furnishes him with horns, and makes him push like a bullock.^k If these circumstances are duly considered, no doubt will remain that he is nearly allied to the creatures with which he is associated.

These observations will enable us to examine with more success, the various interpretations of the original name, proposed by different expositors. Our translators, following the Greek fathers, consider the reem as a creature with one horn; and, agreeably to this idea, render it unicorn. But, this interpretation is encumbered with insuperable difficulties. The unicorn is a creature totally unknown in those countries where the Scriptures were written, and the patriarchs sojourned. But, is it probable, that God himself, in his expostulation with Job, would take an illustration of considerable length, from a creature with which the afflicted man was altogether unacquainted; and mention this unknown animal in the midst of those with which he was quite familiar? Nor is it to be supposed,

ⁱ Isa. xxxiv, 7.^j Psa. xxxix, 6.^k Deut. xxxiii, 17.

that Moses, David, and the prophets, would so frequently speak of an animal unknown in Egypt and Palestine, and the surrounding countries; least of all, that they would borrow their comparisons from it, familiarly mention its great strength, and describe its habits and dispositions. Aware of this objection, and at a loss how to elude its force, some writers, on the authority of Pliny, remove the native land of the unicorn to India.¹ But this will be found of no advantage to their cause; for still the objection returns with nearly undiminished force; how could the sacred writers borrow their illustrations from a creature with which, even on this supposition, they were so little acquainted? They make no mention of the elephant, a creature not less powerful and fierce than the unicorn, renowned for its docility, and the various important services which it renders to man; and numerous in Africa, and many countries of Asia. Of this noble animal, the people of Israel seemed to have had no knowledge at all, except what they derived from the trade in ivory, which they carried on during the reign of Solomon to some extent. But, if the elephant, which abounded in countries much nearer the Holy Land than India, whose teeth formed an article of commerce among the ancient Israelites, was so little known to them; it cannot be supposed that they had any knowledge of an animal which was proper to India.

But, we have in reality no proof that such an animal ever existed in any part of the world. It must be admitted, that both Pliny and Ælian have described the unicorn in their writings; but these eminent authors borrowed their statements from Ctesias, a writer of little respectability. Had the unicorn existed in any part of the east, it must

¹ Nat. Hist. lib. viii, cap. 31. Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. xvi, cap. 20.

have been discovered and brought to Rome, by those whom the Romans employed to explore the remotest countries, with the express view of collecting the rarest animals they contained, in order to be exhibited at the public shows. The tiger, the rhinoceros, and other animals, natives of regions which the Roman eagles never visited, were often exhibited in the amphitheatre, before the proud oppressors of the world. So numerous and diversified were the animals produced on the arena at their public entertainments, that Aristides, in his encomium of Rome, declared, "All things meet here, whatsoever is bred or made ; and whatsoever is not seen here, is to be reckoned among those things which are not, nor ever were." But, although these shows continued for many ages; not a single unicorn was ever exhibited at Rome ; a strong proof that no such animal existed. In modern times, the remotest countries in Asia have been traversed, in almost every direction, by intelligent and inquisitive travellers ; but no animal of this kind has been discovered ; nor has the least information been obtained concerning the unicorn, among the natives. From these facts it may be safely concluded, that the unicorn exists only in the imagination of vain and credulous writers, and by consequence, cannot be the reem of the sacred Scriptures.

The rhinoceros, on the contrary, was often exhibited in the amphitheatre at Rome ; and has been frequently seen by modern travellers. No doubt, therefore, can be entertained concerning the reality of its existence : but the character of the reem, given in the Scriptures, will not apply to this animal. The reem, it is evident, was equally well known to Moses and the prophets, and the people whom they addressed, as the bullocks and the bulls with which

they are mentioned. But the rhinoceros inhabits the southern parts of Africa, and the remotest parts of the east, beyond the Ganges ; and by consequence, could be still less known to the people of Israel than the elephant, which is not once mentioned in the sacred volume.

Besides, the reem has large horns ; for, says the Psalmist, “ My horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn ;” but the rhinoceros has seldom more than one, and that of a small size, not exalted like the horn of a reem, but turned back towards the forehead. Nor will the use to which the reem applies his horns, correspond with the manners of the rhinoceros : the former pushes with his horns, which must therefore be placed on his forehead ; but the horn of the latter, which is placed on his nose, and bent backwards, is not formed for pushing, but for ripping up the trunks or bodies of the more soft and succulent trees, and reducing them into a kind of laths, which constitute a part of the animal’s food.^m

It is the opinion of others, that the reem is a species of wild bull ; which they have endeavoured to establish by several plausible arguments. In many places of scripture, say they, the ox and the reem are joined together, as animals of the same family ; in others, the latter is represented as a strong and fierce animal, with large and very strong horns, greatly addicted to push, and by consequence, an enemy much to be dreaded. The reem, therefore, cannot be the buffalo, because his horns being turned inward are unfit for the combat ; but either the bison, or the urus. It is rather supposed, however, that the urus is the reem of the Hebrews, because the bison, though a very fierce and obstinate animal, may be subdued by the

^m Bruce’s Trav. vol. iv, p. 91.

art of man, and at length entirely domesticated. But as to the urus, Cæsar says expressly, that they cannot be tamed and rendered useful to mankind, not even their young ones excepted; they are therefore taken in pits and destroyed. Pliny thus describes the urus: He is of a size little inferior to the elephant; in appearance, colour, and figure, he resembles the bull; his strength and velocity are great; and he neither spares man nor beast that comes in his way.ⁿ

These arguments have considerable weight; but they are liable to the same objections which these very writers have urged with so much force against the claims of the unicorn and the rhinoceros. It is by no means probable, that the sacred writers would make so many allusions to animals, with which the people whom they addressed were utterly unacquainted; would speak so familiarly about them; would borrow their figures and illustrations from their form, dispositions, and manners; or, that Jehovah himself would converse with Job so long about a creature, which was unknown to the people of those countries. The urus sculked from the remotest times, in the deep recesses of the Hircanian forest; and was quite unknown to the Romans before the time of Cæsar. Neither the urus nor the bison, according to Pliny, were to be found in Greece; and the former has been considered by some authors, as a native of Germany. It is even admitted by Boetius, who strenuously maintains the claims of the urus, that he can find no writer who says, that these wild oxen are produced in Syria and Palestine. Aben Ezra, on the contrary, asserts in his commentary on the prophecies of Hosea, that no wild bull is to be found in Judea, and the

ⁿ Nat. Hist. lib. viii, cap. 15 and 70.

surrounding countries. It is not sufficient to say, that these varieties of the bovine family, may have existed there in the times of Moses and the prophets, for a mere conjecture proves nothing. If they existed once, why do they not exist now, as well as the wild goat, the hart, and the antelope? Why is not a single trace of them to be found in the warmer climates of Greece and Asia? Pliny indeed states, that the Indian forests abounded with wild oxen; but it will not follow, that the urus was known to the Jews, because it was discovered in the forests of India, the regions of Scythia, or the more remote wilds of Africa. But the truth is, we have no proof that he meant to speak of the urus or the bison; he only mentions wild oxen in general; from which no certain argument can be drawn in support of the opinion which Boetius and others maintain.

It now remains to be shewn, that the reem of the Old Testament Scriptures is not a variety of the wild ox, but must be classed among the goats. This point the learned Bochart has decided, by numerous quotations from the Arabian, and other eastern writers, in which the original word reem is applied to a species of wild goat, which inhabits the deserts of Palestine, and the neighbouring regions. The statements of the Arabian writers, as quoted by him, are clear and precise; "The reem," says one, "is a goat of a snow white colour; another, "The reem, the plural of which is aram, denotes a goat of a pure white colour, like those which inhabit the sandy deserts." Goats, says Damir, are of different colours; they are of three distinct species, of which the first are called aram, the singular of which is reem. Their colour is a pure white; they inhabit the desert, and become very fat. From these testi-

monies it is evident, that the word reem among the Arabians, denoted the noblest species of wild goat, equally remarkable for its obesity, and the snowy whiteness of its colour. This species are also distinguished by carrying their heads very high, and pricking their ears; from whence it is apprehended, they derive their name. In this application of the original term, the Syriac version, the Chaldee paraphrasts, and the Talmudical writers, all agree with the Arabian historians.^o

To invalidate the force of these arguments, it has been urged, that the reem is connected in the sacred writings with bullocks and bulls, and must therefore be some kindred animal. He stands high on his limbs, and has a large and portly frame; while the goat is the smallest of the horned tribes. The former is represented in the book of Job, as very strong, and a fit companion for the ox in the labours of the field; and prevented from taking part in tilling the ground, bringing home the seed, and gathering it into the barn, only by his fierce and intractable disposition. But a goat is not possessed of great strength, although sufficiently vigorous and active for the sphere in which it is intended to move; it is too weak to draw in the same yoke with the ox, or to take any part in the toils of the husbandman. Hence, in all ages, and among every people, the wild, equally as the domestic goat, has been exempted from the yoke; and their immunity confirmed by the ancient adage, *Ελευθερα αιγες αροτρων*, goats are exempted from the plough. We learn from the prayer of David, already quoted, that the horns of the reem are high; but those of the goat, although somewhat elongated, are not to be compared with the antlers of the stag.

^o Bochart. Hieroz. lib. iii, cap. 27, p. 948, &c.

It deserves also to be particularly remarked, that the reem is a fierce and dangerous animal; while it is universally acknowledged that the goat is a timid and harmless creature.

From this comparison it has been inferred, that the reem, and the wild goat of the desert, must be two different animals. But if these plausible objections are carefully examined, they will be found insufficient to support the conclusion, for the sake of which they are brought forward. If the reem is a kindred animal to bullocks and bulls, because it is mentioned in the same verse, then goats and rams must be animals of the same species, for they are as nearly connected in the preceding verse;^p and for the same reason, rams, and goats, and bullocks, “all of them fatlings of Bashan,” must be numbered among the beeves, for the prophet mentions them in the same passage.^q When the sacred writer speaks of the height and superior strength of that particular species of goat, he does not mean to compare him with the elephant or the bull, but only with those of his own species; he intends merely to assert that the reem, or white goat of the desert, is a much higher and stronger animal than any other of the same species. To this may be referred the words of Balaam concerning Israel: “He hath as it were, the *heights* of an unicorn;” that is, his stature resembles that of a reem. The meaning of the prediction seems to be, that Israel should be as eminent among the nations, as the reem among the goats; or the prophet refers, perhaps, to the erect attitude for which the white goat of the desert is so remarkable, in order to illustrate the rising spirit and improving condition of Israel, since their emancipation from Egyptian bondage;

^p Isa. xxxiv, 6, 7.

^q Ezek. xxxix, 18.

and the high degree of prosperity and glory which they were destined to attain. The strength and vigour of the white goat, although not to be compared with the prodigious power of some animals, is by no means inconsiderable; and nothing prevents him, and others of the same species, from being yoked in the plough, which in those countries is so light that a man may easily carry it in his hand, and performing his part in the labours of the field, but his intractable temper. The Arabian historians represent his horns as very formidable weapons. The doe, says Gesner, resembles the goat in size, figure, and hair: he has horns like a stag, but smooth, long and sharp: he is, however, swift of foot, jealous of his safety, and given to push with his horns. Now if the doe, of which the white goat is a variety, has long sharp horns, with which he is apt to strike his adversaries, the objection relating to the horns of the reem, will be easily removed: if they are long, David might justly say in prayer, "Thou shalt exalt my horn like the horn of the reem;" if they are sharp and ready to be employed against an opponent, Moses might justly say in relation to Joseph, "His horns are the horns of the reem; with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth." The goat is, in general, a timid and harmless animal: but this is not the case in every instance, for in some places he displays great energy and resolution, and if Oppian may be credited, often attacks the wild boar, and obtains the victory. The doe has been known to engage in desperate combat, and to yield the victory only with his life.^r But the reem, or white goat, is a much fiercer animal, which, in the amphitheatre at Rome, where he was often exhibited for the amusement of the people, spread destruction among the dogs by which he was op-

posed.^s There is, says Oppian, a certain tenant of the forest, a beast with a sharp horn, the savage oryx, extremely formidable to the wild beasts.^t In another passage, he describes him as naturally an intrepid and warlike animal, that neither fears the fury of a dog, nor the rage of a wild boar; that shrinks not from the threatening voice of a bull, from the terrific yell of a leopard, nor the inflamed wrath of a lion. So great is his boldness, that he regards not the attack of man: often, too, the robust hunter, who ventures to encounter him, pushed from the rock by the fury of his onset, pays the forfeit of his rashness with his life. When he sees a wild boar, or a lion, preparing to attack him, he immediately lowers his head, inclining it a little to one side, and watching his opportunity, rushes upon his adversary, and with the points of his long sharp horns, pierces his breast. Whether the oryx be precisely the same animal as the white goat of the desert, may be doubted; but it is clearly admitted by Pliny, and other early writers, that the oryx is a species of goat, of a pure white colour, his double spine loaded with fat, with long sharp horns rising from his forehead, black and hard as flint or iron. He, therefore, bears a striking resemblance to the white goat of the desert, if he is not the very same creature; and by consequence might belong to that class of animals which the Hebrews distinguished by the name reem, and the Chaldee paraphrasts by rima and remanin. The size of the oryx also seems to correspond with the brief notices which the inspired writers have given us of the reem. He stands for the most part higher on his limbs than the ox,^u and is not much inferior in size to the rhi-

^s Lib. xiii, Epigram. 95.

^t Quoted by Bochart, lib. iii, cap. 27, p. 968.

^u Herodot. lib. iv, cap. 192.

noceros.^u Thus his character agrees in every particular with the description of the reem in the holy Scriptures.

The oryx inhabits the solitudes of Africa, on the confines of Egypt; from whence he might easily make excursions into the deserts which border on the land of Canaan. He seems indeed to have been properly an Egyptian animal, and familiarly known to the inhabitants of that country.^v His character and habits must have been well known to the people of Israel, that sojourned for several centuries in Egypt, and spent their time chiefly in tending their flocks and herds in the pastures of Goshen, where they probably had many opportunities of meeting him, and many reasons, perhaps, to remember his strength and intrepidity. After their deliverance from the Egyptian yoke, they settled in a neighbouring country, and had occasional intercourse with Egypt. These facts account for the frequent mention of the oryx under the name of the reem, in the sacred volume; and the interesting allusions to its dispositions and manners.

In the opinion of ancient writers, the oryx is distinguished by another name in the sacred volume. The Hebrew term (תאו) *theo*, in Deuteronomy,^w which our translators render *wild ox*, Jerome translates *oryx*; and Aquila uses the same term in translating a passage in Isaiah, as an equivalent for (תא) *tho*, in our version a wild bull.^x Many interpreters, beside the English translators, are disposed to consider these Hebrew terms as the proper name of the buffalo, or some species of wild ox. But it has been already shewn, that Judea and the surrounding countries possessed no wild oxen of any kind; and that three varieties of that animal are the natives of a cold climate.

^u Oppian. lib. ii, l. 445, &c. ^w Deut. xiv, 5.

^v Bochart. Hieroz. lib. iii, cap. 27, p. 971. ^x Isa. li, 20.

The buffalo, it is admitted, is bred in southern latitudes ; but in ancient times, he seems to have been confined to the remotest parts of the east. No mention is made of him, at least, by any writer before the Christian era ; for the *βουβαλος* or *βουβαλις* of the ancient Greeks, was the name of a wild goat.^y Besides, the wild bull was not taken in a net ; but, according to the ancients, in a deep pit, for he is too powerful and furious an animal to be detained by a snare of that kind ; but every variety of the deer, and consequently the oryx, it was the custom to hunt with nets and dogs. This statement renders it extremely probable that the Hebrew word *tho* or *theo*, was a name given to the oryx, the white goat of the desert.

The Coney.

The Hebrew name of this animal, is derived from a verb which signifies to hide, and seems to indicate a creature of a timid and harmless disposition. Unable to avoid or encounter the various dangers to which it would be exposed in the plain, it seeks a shelter among the rocks, in the fissures of which it hides itself from the pursuit of its enemies. This circumstance is attested by the sacred writer in one of the songs of Zion : “ The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats, and the rocks for the (שפנים) shaphans.”^z The choice which the shaphan makes of the rock for the place of its abode, is mentioned by Solomon as a proof of sagacity : “ The shaphans are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks.”^a It is evident from these words also, that the shaphan is a gregarious animal, although they afford us no hint from which the numbers which constitute their little communities may be inferred.

^y Bochart. Hieroz. lib. iii, cap. 28, p. 973, 974.

^z Psa. civ, 18.

^a Prov. xxx, 26.

To what particular animal the name shaphan really belongs, has been much disputed among the learned. In our version, it is rendered by the word coney or rabbit; in which our translators have followed the greater part of modern interpreters. Several circumstances seem to favour this interpretation; it is twice connected in the law of Moses with the hare, as if it were a kindred animal; the noun in the plural, is rendered hares by the Seventy, in which they have been followed by many ancient interpreters of great name: the meaning of shaphan, seems to correspond with the timidity of the rabbit; and it is certain, that the Rabbinical writers formerly interpreted the original word in this manner. Besides, the rabbit is a gregarious animal, of a diminutive size, and found in great numbers in the plain of Jericho.^b But these facts are not sufficient to establish the point for which they are brought forward; for, instead of seeking a habitation in the fissures of the rocks, the rabbit delights to burrow in the sandy downs. Sometimes indeed, he digs a receptacle for himself in rocky eminences, where the openings are filled with earth, but he generally prefers a dwelling in the sand, a situation for which he is evidently formed by Nature. The words of David clearly shew, that the instincts and habits of the shaphan, as naturally and constantly lead him to the rocks for shelter, as those of his associate impel him to rove among the mountains. He does not allude to an occasional residence, but to a fixed and permanent abode; not to the wanderings of a few, but to the habitual choice of a whole species. But the rabbit as uniformly seeks the sandy plain, as the wild goat the summit of the mountain:

“Gaudet in effossis habitare cuniculus antris.”

Martial.

^b Doubdan. Voyage de la Terre sainte, p. 505.

The shaphan, according to Solomon, discovers great wisdom and sagacity in retiring from the plain country, to the natural fastness which the almighty Creator has provided for its reception ; but it is no mark of wisdom in the rabbit, that he forsakes occasionally the sandy plain, which he is naturally formed to occupy, and retires to the rocks which are so little suited to his habits and manners. This is an act of rashness or folly, not of wisdom. The wise man is also noting the sagacity of a whole species, not of a rambling individual ; but the species is to be found on the plain, not among the rocks. Nor is the rabbit a feeble creature ; he runs with considerable swiftness ; and he is provided with the means of digging his burrow, which he employs with so great energy, particularly when alarmed by the approach of danger, that he buries himself in the sand with surprising rapidity. To exert his strength, according to existing circumstances, is all the sagacity which he discovers ; and this it must be admitted, is not peculiar to him, but common to the hare, the hedgehog, and many other animals. He betrays no foresight, except in preparing his dwelling, and he is never known to supply the want of strength by any contrivance. The shaphan, as described both by David and Solomon, exhibits a very different character, and therefore, cannot be the same animal.

But if we apply these characters to the daman Israel, or as Mr. Bruce calls it the ashkoko, the identity of this animal with the shaphan of the Scriptures, will instantly appear :^c “ The daman is a harmless creature, of the same size and quality with the rabbit, and with the like incurvating posture and disposition of the fore-teeth. But it is of a browner colour, with smaller eyes, and a head more pointed, like the marmot’s ; the fore-feet likewise are short,

^c Dr. Shaw’s Trav. vol. ii, p. 160, 161.

and the hinder are nearly as long in proportion as those of the jerboa. Though this animal is known sometimes to burrow in the ground, yet he is so much attached to the rock, that he is seldom or never seen on the ground, or from among large stones in the mouth of caves, where he fixes his constant residence. He is gregarious, as the wise man intimates, and lives in families ; he is a native of Judea, Palestine, and Arabia, and consequently, must have been familiar to Solomon, and other inspired writers. The royal Psalmist, in a passage already quoted, describes him with great propriety, and joins him with other animals which were perfectly known in that country. Solomon favours us with a more detailed account of his character : “ There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise ; the sephanim are a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks.” This exactly corresponds with the character which natural historians give us of the daman Israel, which they represent as equally feeble in body and temper. The toes of his fore-feet very much resemble the fingers of the human hand ; his feet are perfectly round, very pulpy or fleshy, liable to be excoriated or hurt, and of a soft fleshy substance.^d They are quite inadequate to dig holes in the ground, much more to force their way into the hard rock. Unable or afraid to stand upright on his feet, he steals along every moment as it were apprehensive of danger, his belly almost close to the ground, advancing a few steps at a time, and then pausing, as if afraid or uncertain whether he should proceed. His whole appearance and behaviour indicate a mild, feeble, and timid disposition ;

^d Plin. Hist. Natur. lib. viii, cap. 37, and lib. x, cap. 65. Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. xv, cap. 26.

which is confirmed by the ease with which he is tamed. Conscious as it were of his total inability to dig in the ground, or to mingle with the sterner beasts of the field, he builds his house on rocks, more inaccessible than those to which the coney retires, and in which he resides in greater safety, not by exertions of strength, for he has it not, but by his own sagacity and judgment. Solomon has therefore justly characterized him “a feeble animal, but exceeding wise.”

The Arabian writers confound the daman Israel, with the jerboa, which seems to be a species of rat.^e It ruminates, builds its house on the rocks, or digs its abode on the ground, but always in some high and rocky place, where it may be safe from the influx of waters, and the foot of the wild beast. If we may believe the Arabic writer quoted by Bochart,^f these diminutive animals discover no little sagacity in the conduct of public affairs, particularly in appointing a leader, whose business it is to give them notice on the approach of danger, and who in case of neglect is punished with death, and succeeded by another more attentive to their safety. Mr. Bruce, on the contrary, contends with great earnestness, that the habits of the jerboa are quite different from those which Solomon ascribes to the shaphan; he asserts, that the jerboa always digs his habitation in the smoother places of the desert, especially where the soil is fixed gravel; for in that chiefly he burrows, dividing his hole below into many mansions. He is not gregarious like the shaphan, nor is he distinguished for his feebleness, which he supplies by his wisdom. Although, therefore, he ruminates in common with some other animals, and abounds in Judea, he

^e Shaw's Trav. vol. i, p. 323.

^f Hieroz. lib. iii, c. 33, p. 1001.

cannot be the shaphan of the Scripture. Hence, it is probable, that the Arabian writers improperly confounded the daman Israel, or shaphan, and the jerboa; and it may be considered as nearly certain, that the shaphan of Solomon is not the rabbit, but the daman Israel, which, though bearing some resemblance to it, is an animal of a different species.^f

The Mouse.

This animal is so very diminutive, that the Jewish naturalist places it among the reptiles, refusing it the honour of appearing among the quadrupeds. But, small and apparently insignificant as it is, in the oriental regions it often produces greater calamities than are experienced from all the beasts of prey with which they are infested. Formidable by its activity, its voraciousness, and its countless numbers, it lays waste the fields of Palestine and Syria, devours their harvests, and spreads famine and wretchedness among the helpless inhabitants.^g The extent and severity of the distress in which its ravages frequently involve the people of those countries, are sufficiently attested by the offering of five golden mice, from the lords of the Philistines, to appease the wrath of God, and avert the plague under which they had so greatly suffered. The account of this transaction is recorded in the first book of Samuel, and runs in these terms: "Then said they, what shall be the trespass offering which we shall return to him? They answered, five golden emerods, and five golden mice, according to the number of the lords of the Philistines: for one plague was on you all, and on your lords. Wherefore ye shall make images of your emerods, and images of your mice, which mar the land; and

^f See Zoolog. Essays, Christ. Mag. vol. vi.

^g Bochart. Hieroz. lib. iii, p. 1017. Plin. Hist. Natur. lib. x, cap. 65.

ye shall give glory unto the god of Israel : peradventure he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your lands.”^h These words undoubtedly intimate, that Palestine was very often visited by this scourge, and that the sufferings of its inhabitants were very severe. The devastations of this little destructive creature were so frequent, so extensive, and followed by consequences so dreadful, that even the unenlightened Philistines considered them as an immediate judgment from God himself. But this terrible scourge was not peculiar to Palestine : Strabo mentions that so vast a multitude of mice sometimes invaded Spain, as to produce a destructive pestilence ; and in Cantabria, the Romans, by setting a price on a certain measure of these animals, escaped with difficulty from the same calamity. In other parts of Italy the number of field mice was so great, that some of the inhabitants were forced to leave the country. In Thrace, the frogs and mice sometimes united their hordes and compelled the inhabitants to seek new settlements.ⁱ In modern times, instances of the same calamity are not wanting.^j About the beginning of the twelfth century, innumerable swarms of locusts and mice, during four successive years, so completely ravaged that country, as to produce almost a total failure of the necessaries of life. So great and general was the distress of the people, that a kind of penitential council was held at Naplouse, in the year 1120, for the reformation of manners, and to invoke the mercy of the Almighty, who had been provoked by their sins to inflict upon them such terrible judgments.^k

^h 1 Sam. vi, 4, 5.

ⁱ Bochart. Hieroz. lib. iii, cap. 34, p. 1018.

^j Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. iv, p. 293, 294.

^k Harmer's Observ. vol. iii, p. 395.

The Badger.

To enter into the history of this animal is unnecessary, as it is mentioned in Scripture only on account of its skin. This part of the animal seems to have been in great request among the people of Israel, for it is mentioned among the valuable articles which they were permitted to offer for the tabernacle: "Rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins."¹ These last formed the exterior covering of that splendid structure, and of all the sacred utensils, which the Levites were commanded to spread over them during their march. Of these also the shoes of the mystical bride were formed, when, according to the representation of the prophet, she was richly adorned for the marriage. Jehovah had chosen Israel to be his peculiar people, and had bestowed upon them innumerable favours, but they had become ungrateful and perfidious, like a woman who proves inconstant and unfaithful to her husband, who had raised her from the meanest condition, to the greatest affluence and splendour: "Thou becamest mine. Then I washed thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil. I clothed thee also with brodered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin; and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk."^m In this passage, badgers' skin is mentioned as a very precious and splendid substance, such as might be made into shoes for ladies of the highest rank, and worn on their marriage day; while, in the book of Exodus, it is represented as very coarse and homely, fit only to be made a covering for the tabernacle, and its furniture, during the journies of the tribes. These very different representations cannot easily be re-

¹ Exod. xxv, 5, and xxxv, 23.^m Ezek. xvi, 8-14.

conciled, and involve the subject in doubt and uncertainty. And indeed the original word (שחש) *thahash*, which our translators render badgers' skins, is of very uncertain meaning. It is evident from Scripture, that it was a kind of skin which, being capable of resisting rain, was manufactured by the people of Israel into coverings for the tabernacle and its furniture, and into shoes for persons of the highest rank in the state. But the inspired writers furnish no details from which it can be inferred, to what animal it originally belonged; it is even extremely doubtful, whether the word rendered badger, denotes an animal at all. The Seventy interpreters considered it merely as the name of a colour, and uniformly translate it hyacinth, or hyacinthine. In this opinion, they were followed by all the ancient translators of the Scriptures, without one exception; and the same idea has been adopted by the learned Bochart, and other eminent moderns. The reasons on which their interpretation is founded, seem to be quite conclusive.ⁿ

In the first place, no evidence can be found that the badger ever existed in Palestine, Arabia, or Egypt. Dr. Shaw made particular inquiry, but could hear of no such animal in Barbary.^o Harmer was unable to discover in modern travels, the smallest traces of the badger in Egypt, or in any of the adjacent countries; Buffon represents it as unknown in that part of Asia. So little was the badger known to the ancients, that the Greeks had not a word in their language by which to express it; and the Latin term which is supposed to denote this animal, is extremely doubtful. But if the badger is not a native of the east,

ⁿ Bochart. Hieroz. lib. iii, cap. 30, p. 989.

^o Shaw's Trav. vol. i, p. 318.

if it is not to be found in those countries, from whence could the people of Israel in the wilderness, procure its skin to cover the tabernacle? It is an animal of small size, and is no where found in great numbers; and, by consequence, its skin could not in remote times, more than at present, constitute an article of commerce in the ports of Egypt, and come at last into the possession of that people. The exterior covering of the tabernacle, and its bulky utensils, must have required a greater number of skins, than could be procured even in the native country of the badger; and, therefore, it must have been formed of leather, fabricated from the skin of some other animal, which not only existed, but also abounded in Egypt, and the adjacent countries.

The coarseness of the leather, fabricated of badgers' skin, which in the east, is reluctantly employed for the meanest purposes of life, forbids us to consider it as the material of which the elegant shoes of an oriental lady are formed. When the prophet says in the name of the Lord, "I clothed thee also with brodered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk," he certainly meant, that the shoes, corresponding to the other parts of the dress, were formed of costly materials. The Targum accordingly translates the passage, "I put precious shoes upon thy feet;" but this could be said with no propriety of shoes made of badgers' skins.

Nor can it be supposed, that the skin of an animal, which the law of Moses pronounces unclean, strictly enjoins the people of Israel not to touch, or if they did happen to touch it, not to worship at the tabernacle, till the ceremonial pollution which they had accidentally contracted

was removed according to the precept,—would be employed to cover that sacred structure, and its consecrated utensils, and that the Levites should be obliged often to handle it in performing the duties of their office. The sacred implements of Jewish worship, certainly were defended from the injuries of the weather, by the skins of clean beasts, which were easily procured, and that in sufficient numbers, even in the wilderness. This idea, so conformable to the spotless purity required in the ceremonial law, has been adopted and maintained by all the earlier Jewish writers, whose authority in matters of this kind is entitled to great respect. Many disputes indeed have been agitated among them, in relation to the particular animal employed; but none of them before the time of Jarchi, who flourished about the middle of the eleventh century, supposed that it was the skin of the badger.

These considerations leave no room for doubt in the mind of the writer, that the original term denotes neither the badger, nor any other animal, but merely a colour. What particular colour is meant, it may not be easy to ascertain; but when it is considered, that people of rank and fashion in the east, were accustomed to appear in purple shoes, it is extremely probable, that purple was the colour intended by the sacred writer:

“*Virginibus Tyriis mos est gestare pharetram
Purpureoque alte cruras vincire cothurno.*” *Vir. Æn. lib. i, l. 336.*

The Chaldee Paraphrast accordingly, expounds the words of the Song, “How beautiful are thy feet with shoes,” how beautiful are the feet of Israel, when they go up to appear three times before the Lord in purple sandals! The Roman emperors, and the kings of Persia, reserved by a formal edict, shoes of a purple colour for their own

use; and it is said, red shoes were among the insignia of the ancient kingdom of Bulgaria. Hence, Isaac Comnenus, the Roman emperor, deprived the patriarch of Constantinople of his dignity, because he presumed to put on shoes of a crimson colour, although these were formerly worn at Rome by persons of the senatorial order.^p

The Mole.

The mole is doomed by its maker to a life of darkness and solitude, and to subsist on the meanest fare, in the trench which it is compelled to dig with its own hands, or in the vault where it deposits its young. Possessed of great strength in proportion to the size of its body, a perpetual vigour, and considerable industry and skill, it undertakes and executes works of much labour and singular ingenuity.^q It is a beautiful and harmless little creature, warmly attached to its mate, tremblingly alive to the safety of its young; and constructing its dwelling only in cultivated countries.

The Bat.

The bat is a winged quadruped, the link which connects the four-footed animal and the bird. It is a most deformed and hideous creature, which uniformly endeavours to shun the light of day, as if conscious of its disgusting aspect, and fixes its abode in the horrid cavern or the ruined habitation.^r The great or Ternat bat, belongs to the east, and was not altogether unknown to the ancients. It is noted for its cruelty, voracity, and filthiness. It is more mischievous than any other species of bat; but

^p See Essays on Sacred Zoology, Christ. Mag. vol. vi.

^q Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. iv, p. 312. Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. x, cap. 81. Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, p. 349.

^r Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. iv, p. 318.

it carries on the work of destruction by open force, both during the night and day. It kills poultry and small birds; attacks men and often wounds them in the face. This unsightly animal, says Forbes, fixes its dwelling among owls and noxious reptiles in the desolate tower, or lonely unfrequented mausoleum, which it seldom or never leaves except in the dusk of evening. In the east, where they grow to an enormous size, their stench is so intolerable that it is impossible to remain many seconds to examine the place."^s Into the vault or trench of the mole, and those dismal abodes frequented by the Ternat bats, which man can scarcely endure to visit, the idolater, terrified by the destructive judgments of a just and righteous God, shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold which he made for himself to worship; regardless of their intrinsic value, ashamed of the trust he reposed in them, and distracted by the terrors of the Almighty, he shall cast them in desperation and scorn out of his sight, that freed from the useless encumbrance he may escape for his life. "In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats."^t Instead of building magnificent temples for their reception where nothing to offend the senses is permitted to enter; instead of watching over them with scrupulous care, devoting their days, their riches and all they possess to their service, instead of adoring them with insensate prostrations and offerings, they shall cast them to creatures so vile or dangerous, into places so dismal and loathsome, as to preclude the possibility of returning to their idolatrous practices. Or to cast their idols to the moles and the bats may

^s Oriental Memoirs, vol. ii, p. 254.

^t Isa. ii, 20.

signify the utter destruction of these objects of worship. When the Greeks said, Βαλλ' ες κορακας, cast him to the ravens, the meaning was, cast him to destruction: and this prophecy may refer to a proverbial expression among the Jews of similar import.

CHAP. X.

BIRDS OF PREY.

The Eagle.—The Ostrich.—The Owl.—The Pelican.—The Stork.—The Raven.—The Hawk.

The Eagle.

THE eagle is the strongest, the fiercest, and the most rapacious of the feathered race. He dwells alone in the desert, and on the summits of the highest mountains; and suffers no bird to come with impunity within the range of his flight. His eye is dark and piercing, his beak and talons are hooked and formidable, and his cry is the terror of every wing. His figure answers to his nature; independently of his arms, he has a robust and compact body, and very powerful limbs and wings; his bones are hard, his flesh is firm, his feathers are coarse, his attitude is fierce and erect, his motions are lively, and his flight is extremely rapid. Such is the golden eagle, as described by the most accurate observers of nature.^a To this noble bird the pro-

^a Bochart. Hieroz. vol. iii, lib. ii, p. 161, &c. Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. ii, cap. 26. Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. x, cap. 3, sec. 3. Buffon's Nat. Hist. of Birds, vol. i, p. 49, 50, 52.

phet Ezekiel evidently refers, in his parable to the house of Israel: "A great eagle, with great wings, long winged, full of feathers which had divers colours, came unto Lebanon, and took the highest branch of the cedar."^b In this parable, a strict regard to physical truth is discovered, in another respect; for the eagle is known to have a predilection for cedars, which are the loftiest trees in the forest, and therefore more suited to his daring temper than any other. La Roque found a number of large eagle's feathers, scattered on the ground beneath the lofty cedars which still crown the summits of Lebanon, on the highest branches of which, that fierce destroyer occasionally perches.^c

The extraordinary length of his wings, and the manner, in which he stretches them as he flies, have been celebrated by many ancient writers. Hesiod calls him the bird with extended wings; Pindar asserts, that in the length and extension of his wings, he surpasses all the birds of heaven;^d and Homer, with his usual force and beauty, compares the wings of the eagle to the doors of a splendid apartment, closely shut and skilfully made.

Ὅσση δὲ ὑψοροφοιο θύρα θαλαμοιο τιτυκται. *Il. lib. xxiv, l. 317.*

On these great and expanded wings, the eagle darts with amazing swiftness and impetuosity through the voids of heaven, especially when in pursuit of his prey. He rushes, says Apuleius, upon the devoted victim, like a flash of lightning;^e and Cicero avers, that no bird flies with greater vehemence. The Greeks gave him the appropriate name of *αετος*, from a verb which signifies to rush with great im-

^b Ezek. xvii, 3.

^c Voy. de Syrie et du Mont-Liban, p. 88.

^d Hes. Theog. b. 523. Pindar. Pyth. 5.

^e cccix, 36, et clxxiii, 12.

petuosity. The very sound of his wings, according to Ælian, strikes some of the fiercest beasts of the desert with terror.^f This remarkable trait in his character, did not escape the keen observation of Homer: he compares the rapid and furious onset of Achilles, to the violent pursuit of that bird, which he characterizes the strongest and the swiftest of the winged tribes:

Λεῖτε οἶματ' ἔχων μελανός, τὸ θηρητήριος
Ὅς θ' ἀμα καρτίσος τε καὶ ὠκίσος πετεινῶν. *Il. lib. xxi, l. 253.*

He describes, in nearly the same terms, the career of the amiable and ill-fated Hector:

Οἰμῆσιν δὲ ἄλεις ὥς τ' αἰτὸς ὑψιπετής.
Il. lib. xxii, l. 308.

“Turning, he rushed upon him like a high-soaring eagle, which descends into the plain through the obscure clouds, to seize the tender lamb or trembling hare.” Equally striking and beautiful are the allusions in the sacred oracles: “The Lord shall bring a nation against thee,” said Moses to his people, “from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth.”^g In the affecting lamentation of David over Saul and Jonathan, their impetuous and rapid career is celebrated in more forcible terms, than the great master of Grecian song presumed to use: “They were swifter than eagles; they were stronger than lions.”^h “Behold,” cried Jeremiah, when he beheld in vision the march of Nebuchadnezzar, “he shall come up as clouds, and his chariots shall be as a whirlwind; his horses are swifter than eagles. Woe unto us, for we are spoiled.”ⁱ To the wide expanded wings of the eagle, and the rapidity of his flight, the same prophet beautifully alludes in a subsequent chapter, where he describes the subversion of Moab,

^f De Nat. Animal. lib. ii, cap. 26.

^h 2 Sam. i, 23.

^g Deut. xxviii, 49.

ⁱ Jer. iv, 13.

by the same ruthless conqueror : “ For thus saith the Lord, Behold, he shall fly as an eagle, and shall spread his wings over Moab.”^j In the same manner, he describes the sudden desolations of Ammon in the next chapter ; but when he turns his eye to the ruins of his own country, he exclaims in still more energetic language, “ Our persecutors are swifter than the eagles of the heavens.”^k

Under the same comparison, the patriarch Job describes the rapid flight of time : “ My days are passed away, as the eagle that hasteth to the prey ;”^l no part of them remains, and no trace of them can be discovered. The surprising rapidity, with which the blessings of common providence sometimes vanish from the grasp of the possessor, is thus described by Solomon : “ Riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle towards heaven.”^m

Supported by his powerful wings, the eagle pursues his flight for a long time, without becoming weary or fatigued; and when circumstances require it, by one continued effort, penetrates into the remotest regions.ⁿ In allusion to this fact, the fabulous poets of antiquity say, that two eagles were sent down from Jove, one from the rising and the other from the setting sun, which continued their journey till they met at Delphi, or in the neighbourhood of Parnassus. The same allusion is involved in those Scriptures, which provide them with eagle’s wings, that are to be removed to a great distance. Thus, the church of Christ, under the emblem of a woman, was furnished with “ two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness into her place, from the face of the

^j Jer. xlviii, 40.

^k Lam. iv, 19.

^l Job ix, 26.

^m Prov. xxx, 19.

ⁿ Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, cap. 2, p. 171.

serpent.”^o Her safety required a very far and rapid flight, which only the wings of a golden eagle can sustain; they are therefore selected by the prophet with admirable propriety, to waft the object of divine love and care to her appointed refuge.

The flight of this bird is as sublime, as it is rapid and impetuous. None of the feathered race soar so high; in his daring excursions, he is said to leave the clouds of heaven, and the regions of thunder, and lightning, and tempest, far beneath his feet, and to approach the very limits of æther.^p Hence, the prince of Grecian poets so frequently calls him the high-soaring eagle; and the ancient heathens, when they saw him cleaving the clouds with his expanded pinions, in his descent to the lower regions of the air, considered him as the special messenger of the Supreme, that reposed in his bosom, and assisted his thunder. Corresponding to this, is the celebrated oracle concerning the Athenians: *Αετός εν νεφέλῃσι γενήσεται*, “Thou shalt become an eagle in the clouds.” Still more beautiful and sublime are the words of Obadiah, concerning the pride and humiliation of Moab: “Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord.”^q The prophet Jeremiah pronounces the doom of Edom in similar terms; “O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill; though thou shouldst make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the Lord: Also Edom shall be a desolation: every one that goeth by it shall be astonished.”^r

^o Rev. xii, 14.

^p Apuleius, as quoted by Bochart, lib. ii, p. 170. *Ælian de Natur. Animal. lib. ii, cap. 26.*

^q Obad. v, 4.

^r Jer. xlix, 16.

—In this beautiful passage, the prophet strictly adheres to the truth of history. Esau subdued the original inhabitants of Mount Hor, and seized on its savage and romantic precipices. His descendants covered the sides of their mountains “with an endless variety of excavated tombs and private dwellings, worked out in all the symmetry and regularity of art, with colonnades and pediments, and ranges of corridors, adhering to the perpendicular surface.” On the inaccessible cliffs which, in some places, rise to the height of seven hundred feet, and the barren and craggy precipices, which enclose the ruins of Petra, the capital of the Nebatæi, a once powerful but now forgotten people, the eagle builds his nest, and screams for the safety of his young, when the unwelcome traveller approaches his lonely habitation.^s To these may be added that remarkable passage in Job, where Jehovah thus addresses the afflicted patriarch: “Doth the eagle mount up at thy command,—and make her nest on high? She dwelleth and abideth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place. From thence she seeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off.”^t She builds her nest in the most frightful precipices, from whence she darts a keen and piercing eye over the surrounding scene, and marks her prey at a great distance.^u These and other facts in her history, are expressed in that sublime address, with a truth and energy becoming the Creator of all things. “Doth the eagle,” says Jehovah, “mount up at thy command?” Attempts have been often made to subdue the fierce spirit of the young eagle, and train him to the chase; but with little success. He

^s Eclectic Review, Jan. 1, 1824, p. 27, 28.

^t Job xxxix, 30.

^u Aristotel. Hist. lib. ix, cap. 32. Plin. Hist. Nat. lib. x, cap. 3.

cannot be rendered so tame, gentle, and steady, that his master has not to dread his caprice, or the sudden movements of his angry passions. Man did not impart to him the desire to soar among the clouds, nor can the wisest, or the most powerful of the human race, direct his flight; for, with a rapidity peculiar to himself, he ascends into regions far beyond the reach of the human eye, and the range of human control. Nor did he learn from man, to choose the inaccessible precipice for his abode. His vigorous frame, his daring temper, and all his instincts, are the contrivance and the work of God. The design of his Creator, in directing him to build his nest on the brow of the precipice, is obvious; there, the spoiler of the heavens, and the terror of the smaller quadrupeds, dwells alone and secure, and rears his young, almost beyond the reach and the fear of danger. The highest peak of the mountain or the cliff, is also a convenient station, from whence he marks his prey, and takes his flight; for although he has a most powerful wing, he has so little suppleness in his limbs, that he finds some difficulty in rising from the ground.

The piercing sight of this noble bird, is recorded by the philosophers, and celebrated by the poets of every age. In Homer, he has the sharpest sight among the birds of heaven :

— ὥς τ' αἶστος ὄν ρα τε φαίν
Οἷστατον δερκεσθαι υπερανίων πτετηνων. *Il. lib. xvii, l. 675.*

The same fact is recorded by Horace, in his Third Satire:

— “tum cernis acutum,
Quam aut aquila aut serpens Epidaurius.”

So keen is the sight of the eagle, says Isidore, that, when floating with immovable wing above the deeps of the sea, far beyond the reach of human observation, he can discern

a little fish swimming below.^v Damir, a renowned Arabian writer quoted by Bochart, avers, that the eagle can discover a carcase at the distance of four hundred parasangs.^w

The ancients supposed, that he is superior to thirst, and never drinks water.^x If the words of Jehovah in this passage, “her young ones suck up blood,” do not support the opinion, they certainly do not contradict it; for he does not say they drink water, but only, they suck up blood. But the sacred text actually seems to insinuate what *Ælian*,^y and many writers of antiquity believed, that the blood of the animals upon which they prey, suffices to quench their thirst, without the aid of water. It is added, “Where the slain is there is she.” On this clause, our Lord seems to have had his eye, when he said to his disciples, “Where-soever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.” Natural historians, both ancient and modern, agree in the opinion, that neither the golden nor the common eagle, feeds upon carrion, but the vulture only, which is an eagle of the third species.^z But the words of Scripture are express: “Where the slain are, there is she.” It should also be recollected, that our Lord, in the passage quoted from the evangelist, alludes to the ensigns of the Roman armies: now we know, that these figures represented, not the vulture, but the golden eagle. We must therefore conclude, that this ravenous bird does not refuse to feed upon the carcases of the slain. We are confirmed in this opinion, by one of the proverbs of Solomon, which is couched in these terms: “The eye that mocketh at his

^v Isidorus. Orig. lib. xii, cap. 7.

^w Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, cap. 2, p. 174.

^x Ibid. p. 175.

^y De Nat. Animal. lib. ii, cap. 26, and Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. i, p. 52.

^z Aristotel. Hist. lib. ix, cap. 32. Plin. Hist. Natur. lib. x, cap. 3.

father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it." The eye, it is well known, is a favourite morsel with the birds of prey, and by consequence, the first part of the body upon which they fasten; now, if Solomon is so correct in one part of his description, we have good reason to think he is equally so in the other. In this, as in other particulars, the Arabian historians, who were well acquainted with the eagle, support the credit of the sacred writers. Damir says, the eagle discovers his prey at the distance of four hundred parasangs; and when he lights upon a carcase, of which the ossifrage has eaten, he retires, and refuses to eat what the other has left. Again, when he finds a carcase, and has gorged himself with the flesh, he is unable to fly, till, bounding for some time along the surface of the ground, he raise himself by degrees into the air.^a Thus, the general rule of the natural historian, that the golden and common eagle never feed upon carrion, certainly admits of exception; and indeed, seems to have no real foundation.

Like every bird of prey, the eagle sheds his feathers in the beginning of spring; a circumstance to which the prophet refers in the following charge to his people: "Enlarge thy baldness as the eagle."^b Baldness is a defect properly ascribed to the human species: but we find it is also imputed by some ancient writers to the feathered race. Pliny remarks, that some animals are naturally bald, as the ostrich and the aquatic raven, which among the Greeks received its name φαλακροκοραξ from that circumstance.^c Thus it appears, that both the Greeks and the

^a Quoted by Bochart, lib. ii, cap. 2, p. 175.

^b Micah i, 6. Plin. Hist. Natur. lib. xi, cap. 32.

^c Nat. Hist. lib. x.

Hebrews ascribed baldness to the feathered race, but with this difference, that the former confined it to the head, while the latter extended it to the whole body ; among the former, it was a permanent feature,—among the latter, an annual defect.

When the moulting season is over, and the eagle appears with renovated plumage, vigour, and activity, he is said, in the language of ancient prophecy, to be “ full of feathers.” In allusion to this annual restoration, the Psalmist sings in the beautiful address to his soul, with which he begins the hundred third Psalm, “ Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagles.” The prophet Isaiah has the same allusion, in describing the perseverance of genuine saints : “ But they that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles ; and they shall run and not weary, they shall walk and not faint.”^d As the eagle, when his feathers are renewed, looks younger and more beautiful, and is stronger and livelier than before ; so, the people of God, restored by the communication of divine favour, feel every grace invigorated, and every exercise of religion easy and pleasant.

The tender affection which the female cherishes for her young, is described by Moses in these memorable terms : “ As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings ; so, the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him.”^e It is indeed pretended by some writers, that when the eaglets are somewhat grown, the mother kills the weakest or the most

^d Isa. xl, 31.

Deut. xxxii, 11. Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. ii, cap. 40.

voracious of them; but were the fact admitted, it is no satisfactory proof that she is without natural affection. It is well known that several animals of the mildest dispositions forsake their young, when they find it impossible to provide for their subsistence. The parent eagles, says Buffon, not having sufficient for themselves, seek to reduce their family;^f and as soon as the young ones are strong enough to fly and provide for themselves, they chase them from the nest, and never permit them to return. The account of this celebrated naturalist so far agrees with the statement of the sacred writer; according to whom, the eagle stirreth up her nest, that is, rouses her young from their sloth and inactivity, and provokes them to try their wings by fluttering about her nest. When she sees them indifferent to her admonitions, or afraid to follow her example, “she spreadeth abroad her wings; taketh them, and beareth them upon her wings.” The remarkable circumstance of bearing them upon her wings, is alluded to in another part of Scripture: “Ye have seen,” said Jehovah to Israel, “what I did unto Egypt, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself.”^g Many passages in the writings of ancient authors countenance the idea, that the eagle actually takes up her timid young ones, and bears them on her wings till they venture to fly. Ælian says, that when Tilgamus, a Babylonian boy, fell from the top of a tower, before he reached the ground, an eagle received and bore him up on her back.^h A similar story is recorded in the writings of Pausanias, who tells us, that an eagle flew under Aristimenes, who was cast by the Lacedæmonians from the

^f Nat. Hist. vol. i, p. 51.

^g Exod. xix, 4.

^h De Nat. Animal. lib. xii, cap. 21.

top of a tower, and carried him on her wings till he reached the ground in safety.ⁱ These stories, although the mere creatures of imagination, shew that the idea of the eagle bearing a considerable weight on her wings, was familiar to the ancients. It is not to be supposed, that she wafts her unfledged young through the voids of heaven, or to distant places; the meaning probably is, that she aids with her wings their feeble and imperfect attempts to fly, till, emboldened by her example, and their own success, they fearlessly commit themselves to the air.^j

So did Jehovah for his chosen people: When they were slumbering in Goshen, or groaning in despair of recovering their freedom, he sent his servant Moses to rouse them from their inglorious sloth, to assert their liberty, and to break their chains upon the heads of their oppressors. He carried them out of Egypt, and led them through the wilderness into their promised inheritance. He taught them to know their strength; he instructed them in the art of war; he led them to battle, and by his almighty arm routed their enemies.

So admirable are the qualities of the eagle, that whatever is sublime in heaven, or excellent on the earth, is likened by the sacred writers to that bird. The Most High does not consider it unbecoming his dignity to compare, in more instances than one, his providential vigilance, his support and protection, to the wings of an eagle, and to the various methods she employs to supply the wants of her young, and to instruct them how to provide for themselves. Under the same comparison, the pro-

ⁱ Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, cap. 3, p. 179.

^j Buffon mentions the same fact in reference to the stork. Nat. Hist. vol. viii, p. 250.

phet Ezekiel endeavours to give his people some faint idea of the powerful intelligence, the unwearied activity, and amazing swiftness of holy angels : “ The four living creatures had each the face of an eagle ; and their wings were stretched upward ; two wings of every one were joined one to another, and two covered their bodies.”^k In the tenth chapter, the prophet was favoured with the same vision ; and in his description, he expressly calls the four living creatures the cherubim, one of the names by which the angels are distinguished ; in the fourteenth verse, he repeats the remark : “ every one had the face of an eagle ;” and observes in the twentieth verse, “ This is the living creature that I saw under the God of Israel, by the river of Chebar ; and I knew that they were the cherubim.”

In another part of his prophecy, the eagle, with admirable propriety, symbolizes the kings and princes of the earth, by whose murderous expeditions the fairest regions are depopulated. The king of Babylon, the greatest potentate of those times, is fitly represented in the parable of the two eagles and the vine, by “ a great eagle with great wings, long winged, full of feathers which had divers colours, which came unto Lebanon, and took the highest branch of the cedar.”^l The meaning of this parable is explained by the prophet himself, in the twelfth verse : “ Say, now, to the rebellious house, Know ye not what these things mean ? Tell them, Behold, the king of Babylon is come to Jerusalem, and has taken the king thereof, and the princes thereof, and led them with him to Babylon.” The second eagle is the king of Egypt, as we learn by comparing the seventh and fifteenth verses :

^k Ezek. i, 10, 11.

^l Ch. xvii, 8.

“ There was also another great eagle, with great wings and many feathers ; and, behold, this vine did bend her roots towards him, and shot forth her branches toward him, that he might water it by the furrows of her plantation.” This allegory he explains in the fifteenth verse : “ But he rebelled against him in sending his ambassadors into Egypt, that they might give him horses and much people.” The reason of the figure must be obvious to every reader : the strength, the activity, the erect and majestic mien of the eagle, point him out as the intended sovereign of the feathered race ; he is, therefore, the fit emblem of superior excellence, and of regal majesty and power. Xenophon, and other ancient historians inform us, that the golden eagle with extended wings, was the ensign of the Persian monarchs, long before it was adopted by the Romans;^m and it is very probable that the Persians borrowed the symbol from the ancient Assyrians, in whose banners it waved, till imperial Babylon bowed her head to the yoke of Cyrus. If this conjecture be well founded, it discovers the reason why the sacred writers, in describing the victorious march of the Assyrian armies, allude so frequently to the expanded eagle. Referring still to the Babylonian monarch, the prophet Hosea proclaimed in the ears of Israel, the measure of whose iniquities was nearly full : “ He shall come as an eagle against the house of the Lord.”ⁿ Jeremiah predicted a similar calamity to the posterity of Lot : “ For thus saith the Lord, Behold, he shall fly as an eagle, and shall spread his wings over Moab : ”^o and the same figure is employed to denote the sudden destruction which overtook the house of Esau : “ Behold, he shall come up and

^m Cyroped. lib. vi, p. 382.

ⁿ Hos. viii, 1. ^o Jer. xlviii, 40.

fly as the eagle, and spread his wings over Bozrah.”^p The words of these inspired prophets were not suffered to fall to the ground; they received a full accomplishment in the irresistible impetuosity and complete success with which the Babylonian monarchs, and particularly Nebuchadnezzar, pursued their plans of conquest. Ezekiel denominates him with striking propriety, “a great eagle with great wings;” because he was the most powerful monarch of his time, and led into the field, more numerous and better appointed armies (which the prophet calls by a beautiful figure, his wings), than perhaps the world had ever seen. The prophet Isaiah, referring to the same monarch, predicted the subjugation of Judea in these terms: “He shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over; he shall reach even to the neck, and the stretching out of his wings (the array of his army) shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel.”^q The king of Egypt is also styled by Ezekiel, “a great eagle with great wings and many feathers;” but he manifestly gives the preference to the king of Babylon, by adding, that he had long wings, full of feathers which had divers colours:” that is, greater wealth, and a more numerous army. Although the king of Egypt was in those days very powerful, and supported his claims by a numerous and well appointed army, his resources were neither so great, nor his subjects so numerous, as those of his rival; and by consequence, he was unable to yield the assistance to Judah, which the necessity of her affairs required. By her treachery in breaking the covenant which she had solemnly made and ratified with Nebuchadnezzar, she had forfeited the divine favour, and provoked the Most

^p Jer. xlix, 22.^q Isa. viii, 8.

High to send up against her the king of Babylon, with all his forces ; therefore, the king of Egypt failed in his attempt to support her falling state, and involved himself and his people in irretrievable ruin.

Believers in Christ are supposed, by several writers of great name, to be symbolized by the eagles, in that passage of the gospel where our Lord foretells the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman army : “ For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.”^r Innumerable converts will flock to a crucified Saviour, with the alacrity and speed of eagles that are greedy of their prey. “ Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west,” irradiating every part of the world ; so shall the Saviour openly and suddenly appear, and every eye shall behold his glory. With surprising power shall he level the lofty and polluted city of Jerusalem with the ground, and sweep with the besom of destruction every part of his ancient heritage ; while he shall spread his gospel with irresistible light and efficacy, far and wide through the habitable globe. And, as the eagles, with wonderful sagacity, gather instantaneously about the dead carcase ; so shall a willing people, in the day of divine power, by a sudden and irresistible influence, believe in the name of Christ, and live upon his atoning sacrifice. Nor are believers unfitly compared to eagles ; for no person is united to him, and honoured with the special favour of God, who does not “ eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood.” The saints are called eagles, observes Chrysostom in one of his homilies, to shew, that he ought to

^r Mat. xxiv, 28.

soar high who approaches the body of Christ ; he ought to have no communion with the earth, nor be dragged down to inferior objects, nor grovel in the dust ; but always mount upwards, and gaze with eager eyes upon the Sun of righteousness.

The Ostrich.

The ostrich is by far the largest among the winged tribes, and seems to be the connecting link between the quadruped and the fowl. She is not to be classed with the former, because she is furnished with a kind of wings, which, if they cannot raise her from the ground, greatly accelerate her flight ; not with the latter, for “ the feathers which grow out of her small wings, are all unwoven and decomposed, and their beards consist of long hairs detached from one another, and do not form a compact body to strike the air with advantage ; which is the principle office for which the feathers of the wing are intended.” Those of the tail have also the same structure, and, by consequence, cannot oppose to the air a suitable resistance. They can neither expand nor close, as circumstances require, nor take different inclinations ; and what is not a little remarkable, all the feathers which cover the body exhibit the same conformation. The ostrich has not, like the greater part of other birds, feathers of various kinds, some soft and downy, which are next the skin ; and others of a more firm and compact consistence, which cover the former ; and others still longer and of greater strength, on which the movements of the animal depend. All her feathers are of one kind, all of them bearded with detached hairs or filaments, without consistence and reciprocal adherence ; in one word, they are of no utility in flying, or in directing the flight. Besides the peculiar

structure of her wings, she is pressed down to the earth by her enormous size. Buffon calculates the weight of a living ostrich in middling condition, at no less than sixty-five or eighty pounds; which would require an immense power in the wings and motive muscles of these members, to raise and support in the air so ponderous a mass. Thus, by her excessive weight and the loose texture of her feathers, she is condemned like a quadruped, laboriously to run upon the surface of the earth, without being ever able to mount up into the air.^s

But although incapable of raising herself from the ground, she is admirably fitted for running. The greater part of her body is covered with hair, rather than feathers; her head and her sides have little or no hair; and her legs, which are very thick and muscular, and in which her principal force resides, are in like manner almost naked; her large sinewy and plump feet, which have only two toes, resemble considerably the feet of a camel; her wings armed with two spikes, like those of a porcupine, are rather a kind of arms than wings, which are given her for defence.^t

These characteristic features throw great light on a part of the description, which Jehovah himself has condescended to give of this animal in the book of Job. It begins with this interrogation: "Gavest thou wings and feathers unto the ostrich?" Dr. Shaw translates it: "The wing of the ostrich is expanded; the very feathers and plumage of the stork."^u According to Buffon, the ostrich is covered with feathers alternately white and black,

^s Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. i, p. 325.

^t Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, p. 217. Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. i, p. 326, 327.

^u Trav. vol. ii, p. 340.

and sometimes grey by the mixtures of these two colours. They are shortest, says that author, on the lower part of the neck, the rest of which is entirely naked ; they become longer on the back and the belly ; and are longest at the extremity of the tail and the wings : but he denies that any of them have been found with red, green, blue, or yellow plumes. This assertion, however, is not quite correct ; for if credit is due to Dr. Shaw, “ when the ostrich is full grown, the neck, particularly of the male, which before was almost naked, is now very beautifully covered with red feathers. The plumage, likewise, upon the shoulders, the back, and some parts of the wings, from being hitherto of a dark greyish colour, becomes now as black as jet, whilst some of the feathers retain an exquisite whiteness. They are, as described in the thirteenth verse, the very feathers and plumage of the stork ; that is, they consist of such black and white feathers as the stork, called from thence *πτελαργος*, is known to have. But the belly, the thighs, and the breast, do not partake of this covering, being usually naked ; and when touched, are of the same warmth as the flesh of quadrupeds.”^u

The ostrich, although she inhabits the sandy deserts, where she is exposed to few interruptions, is extremely vigilant and shy. She betakes herself to flight on the first alarm, and traverses the waste with so great agility and swiftness, that the Arab is never able to overtake her, even when he is mounted upon his horse of Family.^x The

^u Shaw's Trav. vol. ii, p. 342.

^v Ibid. p. 343. Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. x, cap. 1. Xen. Anab. lib. i, cap. 5, sec. 3. No one has caught the ostrich, and they who attempted it soon gave up the pursuit ; for with inconceivable speed, she fled away far beyond their reach.

fact is thus stated by Jehovah : “ What time she lifteth up herself on high, she scorneth the horse and his rider.”^w She affords him only an opportunity of admiring at a distance the extraordinary agility and stateliness of her motions, the richness of her plumage, and the great propriety of ascribing to her “ an expanded quivering wing.”^y Nothing certainly can be more beautiful and entertaining than such a sight ; the wings, by their continual though unwearied vibrations, serving her at once for sails and oars, whilst her feet, no less assisting in conveying her out of sight, are equally insensible of fatigue. Her surprising swiftness is confirmed by the writer of a voyage to Senegal, who says, “ She sets off at a hand gallop ; but after being excited a little, she expands her wings as if to catch the wind, and abandons herself to a speed so great that she seems not to touch the ground.” “ I am persuaded,” continues that writer, “ she would leave far behind the swiftest English courser.”^y Buffon also admits that the ostrich runs faster than the horse.^z These unexceptionable testimonies completely vindicate the assertion of the inspired writer. But as it is on horseback the Arab pursues and takes her, it is necessary to explain how he accomplishes his purpose, and shew its consistency with the sacred writings. “ When the Arab rouses an ostrich,” says Buffon, “ he follows her at a distance, without pressing her too hard, but sufficiently to prevent her from taking food, yet not to determine her to escape by a prompt flight.” Here the celebrated naturalist fairly admits that she has it in her power to escape if she were sufficiently

^w Job xxxix, 18.

^x Ch. v, 13.

^y Sparman's Voy. ch. iv, sec. 11, vol. i, p. 130.

^z Nat. Hist. vol. i, p. 362.

alarmed. "It is the more easy," continues our author, "to follow her in this manner, because she does not proceed in a straight line, and because she describes almost always in her course a circle more or less extended." The Arabs, then, have it in their power to direct their pursuit in a concentric interior circle, and by consequence straiter; and to follow her always at a just distance, by passing over much less ground than she. When they have thus fatigued and starved her for a day or two, they take their opportunity, rush in upon her at full speed, leading her always as much as possible against the wind, and kill her with their clubs, to prevent her blood from spoiling the beautiful whiteness of her feathers. In this account of Buffon, the highest modern authority in matters of this kind,^a nothing occurs to contradict the assertion of the inspired writer; while he distinctly admits that she runs faster than the fleetest horses, and could not be taken but by artful management.

She constructs her humble nest in the bare ground, excavating the sand with her feet. It is hollow in the middle and fortified on all sides by a circular mound of some height, for the purpose of preventing the rain from flowing into the nest and wetting her young.^b From the most accurate accounts which Dr. Shaw could obtain from his conductors, as well as from Arabs of different places, it appears, that the ostrich lays from thirty to fifty eggs. Ælian mentions more than eighty;^c but Shaw never heard of so great a number. The first egg is deposited in the centre; the rest are placed as conveniently as possible round about it. In this manner, it is said, to lay, depo-

^a Nat. Hist. vol. i, p. 362, 363.

^b Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. xiv, cap. 7.

^c Ibid.

site, or trust “her eggs in the earth, and to warm them in the sand, and forgetteth (as they are not placed like those of some other birds upon trees, or in the clefts of rocks, &c.) that the foot (of the traveller) may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them.”^d

She seems in a great measure, insensible to the tender feelings which so powerfully operate in the greater part of other animals. This assertion indeed, Buffon seems inclined to controvert: “As soon,” says that writer, “as the young ostriches are hatched, they are in a condition to walk, and even to run and seek their food; so that, in the torrid zone, where they find the degree of heat which they require, and the food which is proper to them, they are emancipated at their birth, and abandoned by their mother, of whose care they have no need. But in countries less warm, for example at the Cape of Good Hope, the mother watches over her young, so long as her assistance is necessary, and on all occasions, her cares are proportioned to their wants.”^e

This account, Buffon takes from Leo Africanus and Kolbè, to whom he refers; in which it is admitted, that the mother abandons her offspring as soon as they are hatched, although it is alleged, not for want of affection, but because her cares are not necessary. But this is to suppose, that they are not like other young creatures, all of which, require more or less attention from their parents for some time after their birth; an anomaly, which cannot be admitted but on the most convincing evidence.

^d Job xxxix, 14. Dr. Shaw’s Trav. vol. ii, p. 343. Buffon’s Nat. Hist. vol. i, p. 345.

^e Buffon’s Nat. Hist. vol. i, p. 348. In these statements he has followed the unsupported assertions of Ælian, lib. xiv, cap. 7.

Let us now hear the account of Dr. Shaw, who travelled in the native country of the ostrich, and borrowed his information from the Arabs, who were well acquainted with all her habits and dispositions. "Upon the least distant noise, or trivial occasion, she forsakes her eggs or her young ones, to which, perhaps she never returns; or, if she does, it may be too late, either to restore life to the one, or to preserve the lives of the other." Agreeably to this account, the Arabs meet sometimes with whole nests of these eggs undisturbed; some of which are sweet and good; others are addle and corrupted; others again, have their young ones of different growths, according to the time, it may be presumed, they have been forsaken by the dam. They oftener meet a few of the little ones, no bigger than well grown pullets, half starved, straggling and moaning about, like so many distressed orphans, for their mother. And in this manner, the ostrich may be said, as in verse sixteenth, "to be hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers; her labour (in hatching and attending them so far) being in vain without fear," or the least concern of what becomes of them afterwards. This want of affection, is also recorded by Jeremiah in his lamentations: "The daughter of my people is cruel, like the ostriches in the wilderness."^f

In her private capacity, she is not less inconsiderate and foolish, particularly in the choice of food, which is often highly detrimental and pernicious to her; for she swallows every thing greedily and indiscriminately, whether it be pieces of rags, leather, wood, stone, or iron. When Dr. Shaw was at Oran, he saw one of these birds swallow, without any seeming uneasiness or inconveniency, several

^f Lam. iv, 3. Dr. Shaw's Trav. vol. ii, p. 344.

leaden bullets, as they were thrown upon the floor, scorching hot from the mould; the inward coats of the œsophagus and stomach being, in his opinion, probably better stocked with glands and juices, than in other animals with shorter necks. They are particularly fond of their own excrement, which they greedily eat up as soon as it is voided; no less fond are they of the dung of hens and other poultry. It seems as if their optic, as well as their olfactory nerves, were less adequate and conducive to their safety and preservation, than in other creatures. The divine Providence in this, no less than in other respects, “having deprived them of wisdom, neither hath it imparted to them understanding.”^h This part of her character is fully admitted by Buffon, who describes it in nearly the same terms.ⁱ

The ostrich was aptly called by the ancients, a lover of the deserts.^j Shy and timorous in no common degree, she retires from the cultivated field, where she is disturbed by the Arabian shepherds and husbandmen, into the deepest recesses of the Sahara. In those dreary and arid wastes, which are scarcely ever refreshed with a shower, she is reduced to subsist on a few tufts of coarse grass, which here and there languish on their surface, or a few other solitary plants equally destitute of nourishment, and in the Psalmist’s phrase, even “withered before they are grown up.” To this dry and parched food, may perhaps be added, the great variety of land snails which occasionally cover the leaves and stalks of these herbs, and which

^h Job xxxix, 17. Shaw’s Trav. vol. ii, p. 345.

ⁱ Nat. Hist. vol. i, p. 350. See also Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. x, cap. 1. Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. xiv, cap. 7.

^j Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, cap. 14, p. 227.

may afford her some refreshment. Nor is it improbable, that she sometimes regales herself on lizards and serpents, together with insects and reptiles of various kinds.^k Still, however, considering the voracity and size of this camel bird, it is wonderful how the little ones should be nourished and brought up; and especially, how those of fuller growth, and much better qualified to look out for themselves, are able to subsist.^l

The attachment of this bird to the barren solitudes of the Sahara, is frequently alluded to in the holy Scriptures; particularly in the prophecies of Isaiah, where the word יענב, yaanah, in our translation the owl, ought to be rendered the ostrich. In the splendid palaces of Babylon, so long the scenes of joy and revelry, the prophet foretold, that the shy and timorous ostrich should fix her abode; than which a greater and more affecting contrast can scarcely be presented to the mind: “And their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and ostriches shall dwell there.--- And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof; and it shall be an habitation of dragons, and a court for ostriches.”^m

When the ostrich is provoked, she sometimes makes a fierce, angry, and hissing noise, with her throat inflated, and her mouth open; when she meets with a timorous adversary that opposes but a faint resistance to her assault, she chuckles or cackles like a hen, seeming to rejoice in the prospect of an easy conquest. But in the silent hours of night, she assumes a quite different tone, and makes a very doleful and hideous noise, which sometimes resembles

^k Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. i, p. 325.

^l See Dr. Shaw's Trav. vol. ii, p. 346.

^m Isa. xiii, 21, and xxxiv, 13, &c.

the roaring of a lion; at other times, it bears a nearer resemblance to the hoarser voices of other quadrupeds, particularly the bull and the ox. She frequently groans, as if she were in the greatest agonies; an action to which the prophet beautifully alludes: "I will make a mourning like the yaanah or ostrich." The Hebrew term is derived from the verb ענה, *anah*, to exclaim or cry with a loud voice; and may therefore be attributed with sufficient propriety to the ostrich, whose voice is loud and sonorous; especially, as the word does not seem to denote any certain or determined mode of voice or sound peculiar to any one particular species of animals, but one that may be applicable to them all.ⁿ

Dr. Brown confirms this account in every particular; he says, the cry of the ostrich resembles the voice of a hoarse child, and is even more dismal. It cannot then but appear mournful, and even terrible to those travellers, who plunge with no little anxiety into those immense deserts, to whom every living creature, man not excepted, is an object of fear, and a cause of danger.^o

Not more disagreeable, and even alarming, is the hoarse moaning voice of the ostrich to the lonely traveller in the desert, than were the speeches of Job's friends to that afflicted man. Of their harsh and groundless censures, which were continually grating his ears, he feelingly complains: "I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to (ostriches) owls." Like these melancholy creatures that love the solitary place, and the dark retirement, the bereaved and mourning patriarch loved to dwell alone, that he might be free from the teasing impertinences of

ⁿ Dr. Shaw's Trav. vol. ii, p. 349.

^o Trav. p. 40 and 261. Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. i, p. 365.

his associates, and pour out his sorrows without restraint. But he made a wailing also like the dragons, and a mourning like the ostriches; his condition was as destitute, and his lamentations as loud and incessant as theirs. Or, he compares to those birds his unfeeling friends, who, instead of pouring the balm of consolation into his smarting wounds, added to the poignancy of his grief, by their inhuman conduct. The ostrich, even in a domestic state, is a rude and fierce animal; and is said to point her hostility, with particular virulence, against the poor and destitute stranger that happens to come in her way. Not satisfied with endeavouring to push him down by running furiously upon him, she will not cease to peck at him violently with her bill, and to strike at him with her feet, and will sometimes inflict a very serious wound.^p The dispositions and behaviour of Job's friends and domestics, were equally vexatious and afflicting; and how much reason he had to complain, will appear from the following statement: "They that dwell in mine house, and my maidens, count me for a stranger; I am an alien in their sight. I called my servant, and he gave me no answer; my breath is strange to my wife, though I entreated for the children's sake of mine own body; yea, young children despised me, all my inward friends abhorred me. Upon my right hand rise the youth; they push away my feet, and they raise up against me the ways of their destruction. They mar my path, they set forward my calamity, they have no helper. They come upon me as a wide breaking in of waters; in the desolation they rolled themselves upon me."^q

^p Shaw's Trav. vol. ii, p. 348. ^q Job xxx, 12.

The Owl.

The bird of night, which, like the ostrich, delights in the desert and solitary place, is distinguished by several names in the sacred writings. In the book of Psalms, it is mentioned under the name kous, which is evidently derived from the verb kasah, to hide; because the owl constantly hides herself in the day time, and comes abroad in the evening. The Seventy, Theodotion, Aquila, and other interpreters, render it *νυκτινοραξ*, in English, the horned owl. The learned Bochart suspected that kous might denote the onocrotalus, thus named from its monstrous cap or bag under the lower chap.^r It must be admitted, that kous might properly enough be given as a name to that bird, from this extraordinary circumstance in its form; but after the most diligent inquiry, the writer has not been able to discover any difference between the pelican of the ancients, and the onocrotalus; and as kaath is mentioned in the same contexts with kous, and rendered in the ancient versions either the pelican or onocrotalus, kous, in his opinion, must have a different meaning. This idea receives no little confirmation from a passage in the hundred second Psalm, where kous is followed in construction by haraboth, and signifies kous, not of the desert as we render it, but of the desolate or ruined buildings; which exactly corresponds with the habits of the owl, but does not seem so applicable to the onocrotalus, or pelican.

Buffon calls the horned owl the eagle of the night, and the sovereign of that tribe of birds which shun the light of day, and never fly but in the evening, or after it is dark. But, as a description of it is connected with the illustration of no passage of Scripture, it falls not within the de-

^r Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, p. 281.

sign of this work. The voice of the horned owl is said to be frightful, and is often heard resounding in the silence of night; which is the season of his activity, when he flies abroad in search of his prey. He inhabits the lonely rocks or deserted towers on the sides of the mountains; he seldom descends into the plain, and never willingly perches upon trees. The dreary and frightful note of the owl sounding along the desert, and alarming or terrifying the birds that are reposing in their nests, represents in a very striking manner, the deep and lonely afflictions of the royal Psalmist, and the affecting complaints which his distresses wrung from his bosom.^s

Yansuph is another term which our translators render the owl; it occurs only three times in the sacred volume, and is derived from the verb nashaph to blow, or from nesheph the twilight or the dawn. It is supposed to denote a species of owl, which flies about in the twilight; and is the same as the twilight bird. But of this interpretation Parkhurst disapproves, contending, that since the yansuph is clearly mentioned by Moses among the water fowls,^t and the Seventy have in two passages rendered it by ibis,^u it should seem to mean some kind of water fowl, resembling the bird of that name; and, from its derivation, remarkable for its blowing. And of such birds, he says, the most eminent seems to be the bittern, which, in the north of England, is called the mire drum, from the noise it makes, which may be heard a long way off. But the opinion of Bochart, that it denotes the owl, is more probable; because the owl delights in the silent desert, where little or no water is to be found; while the

^s Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. x, cap. 12 and 16. Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. ii, p. 258. ^t Deut. xi, 17. ^u Deut. xiv, 16. Is. xxxiv, 11.

ibis is an aquatic bird, whose instincts lead it to the lake, or running stream. In the thirty-fourth chapter of Isaiah, the *yansuph* is mentioned as frequenting the desolated land of Edom, which, according to Dr. Shaw, is remarkably destitute of water, and by consequence, quite improper for the abode of a water fowl, which feeds on fish. It is admitted, that the kaath or pelican, another water fowl, is mentioned in the same text with yansuph; that all the larger water fowls are extremely shy; that they sometimes build their nests in retired places, a long way from the water where they seek their food; and that even the common heron will come at least twelve or fourteen miles, and perhaps much farther from her usual residence, to the lakes and streams which abound with fish. But no argument can be founded on the arrangements of Scripture, in matters of this kind; because the inspired writers do not always observe a strict order, or scientific classification. It ought also to be remembered, that in the passage quoted from Isaiah, the yansuph is connected with the raven, which is not an aquatic bird. The owl and the raven are associated with greater propriety in scenes of desolation, to which they have been assigned by the common suffrage of mankind, and accordingly regarded as inauspicious birds, and objects of fear and aversion:

“Foedaque fit volucris venturi nuntia luctus
Ignavus bubo dirum mortalibus omen.” *Ovid.*^v

The presence of the owl and the raven, two hateful birds, in company with the cormorant and the bittern, greatly heighten the general effect of the picture delineated by the prophet: “But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it; and

^v Metam. lib. v, Fab. 8; et Apuleius, lib. iii, Metam.

he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness."

The Pelican.

The pelican is another bird of the desert, to which the sacred writers sometimes allude. Its Hebrew name is kaath, literally the vomiter, from the Hebrew word kaath, to vomit. The reason assigned for this name by the ancients is, that it discharges the shells it had swallowed, after they have been opened by the heat of its belly, in order to pick out the fish, which form its principal food. This fact, says Bochart, is so generally attested by the writers of antiquity, that it cannot be called in question; and then cites a great number of authorities in its support.^w But with all deference to this learned writer, it may be justly doubted, if this bird really takes the shell fish on which it feeds, into its stomach, in the first instance; it is more probable that it deposits them in the bag or pouch under its lower chap, which serves not only as a net to catch, but also as a repository for its food. In feeding its young ones, (whether this bag is loaded with water or more solid food,) the pelican squeezes the contents of it into their mouths, by strongly compressing it upon its breast with its bill; an action which may well justify the propriety of the name which it received from the ancient Hebrews. To the same habit, it is probable, may be traced the traditionary report, that the pelican, in feeding her young, pierces her own breast, and nourishes them with her blood.^x

Dr. Shaw contends, that kaath cannot mean the pelican,

^w Hieroz. lib. ii, p. 292. See Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. iii, cap. 23.

^x Shaw's Trav. vol. ii, p. 302. Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. x, cap. 66. Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. viii, p. 259.

because the royal Psalmist describes it as a bird of the wilderness, where that fowl must necessarily starve, because its large webbed feet, and capacious pouch, with the manner of catching its food, which can only be in the water, shew it to be entirely a water fowl. But this objection proceeds on the supposition, that the deserts which it frequents contain no water, which is a mistake ; for Ptolemy places three lakes in the interior parts of Marmorica, which is extremely desolate ; and Moses informs us, that the people of Israel met with the waters of Mara, and the fountains of Elim, in the barren sands of Arabia. Besides, it is well known that a water fowl often retires to a great distance from her favourite haunts ; and this is confirmed by a fact, which Parkhurst states from the writings of Isidore, that the pelican inhabits the solitudes of the Nile. This far-famed river, as we know from the travels of Mr. Bruce, rolls its flood through an immense and frightful desert, where water fowls of different kinds undoubtedly find a secure retreat. Mr. Bruce himself sprang a duck in the burning wilderness, at a considerable distance from its banks, which immediately winged her flight towards it ; a clear proof of her being familiarly acquainted with its course.^y From this circumstance we may infer, that the pelican is no stranger to the most desert and inhospitable borders of the Nile. It also appears from Damir, the Arabian naturalist, quoted by Bochart, that the pelican, like the duck which Bruce found in the desert of Senaar, does not always remain in the water, but sometimes retires from it to a great distance ; and indeed its monstrous pouch, which, according to Edwards, in his natural history of birds, is capable of receiving twice the size of a

^y Trav. vol. vi, p. 491.

man's head, seems to be given it for this very reason, that it might not want food for itself and its young ones, when at a distance from the water.

Bochart is of opinion, that kaath, in some passages of Scripture, is intended to express the bittern, which differs from the pelican, by his own admission, only in the form of the bill. Thus, the holy Psalmist complains, "I am like a pelican (bittern) of the wilderness; I am like an owl of the desert."^z The clear and consistent exposition of this passage, he contends requires the word kaath to be rendered bittern; because the sacred writer compares himself to the bittern and the owl, or more properly the ostrich, on account of his groaning. It is therefore natural to conclude, that both these animals have a mournful cry. Many reasons have been advanced, to prove that the chos, rendered in our translation the owl, is in reality the female ostrich; of which this is one, that it has a most hideous voice, resembling, in a very remarkable manner, the lamentations of a human being in deep affliction. That the Psalmist may be consistent with himself, the same thing must be asserted of the kaath, which it would be difficult to admit, if that term signified only the pelican; for natural historians observe a profound silence in relation to the voice of that bird. But if the name kaath is common to the bittern and the pelican, the difficulty vanishes, for the former has a clear voice. All the ancient natural historians agree, that the bittern, by inserting its bill in the mud of the marsh, or plunging it under water, utters a most disagreeable cry, like the roaring of a bull, or the sound of distant thunder.

But the opinion of that celebrated writer, in this in-

^z Psa. cii, 56.

stance, rests upon a false, or at least an uncertain foundation. The afflicted Psalmist seems to refer, not so much to the plaintive voice of these birds, as to their lonely situation in the wilderness. One of the first and most common effects of pungent sorrow, is the desire of solitude; and on this occasion, the royal Psalmist, oppressed with grief, seems to have become weary of society, and like the pelican, or the female ostrich, to have contracted a relish for deep retirement. Besides, as our author allows that the pelican and the bittern differ only in the form of the bill, the translation for which he contends is of no real importance; and it is certainly a good rule to admit of no change in a received translation, unless it can be shewn, that the new term or phrase expresses the meaning of the original with greater justness, propriety, or elegance.

The Stork.

This bird has long been celebrated for her amiable and pious dispositions, in which she has no rival among the feathered race. Her Hebrew name is *hasida*, which signifies pious or benign; to the honour of which, her character and habits, as described by the pen of antiquity, prove her to be fully entitled. She is thus celebrated by an ancient poet:

“Ciconia etiam grata, peregrina, hospita
Pietati-cultrix.”——— *Petronius.*

Her kind benevolent temper she discovers in feeding her parents in the time of incubation, when they have not leisure to seek their food, or when they have become old, and unable to provide for themselves.^a This attention of the stork to her parents, is confirmed by the united voice of

^a Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. vii, p. 257, 258.

antiquity ; and we find nothing in the Scriptures to invalidate the testimony.^b

She was classed by the Jewish lawgiver among the unclean birds, probably because she feeds on serpents, and other venemous animals, and rears her young by means of the same species of food. This fact is attested by Juvenal in these lines :

— “ serpente ciconia pullos
Nutrit et inventa per devia rura lacerta.”^c Sat. 14.

In the challenge which the Almighty addressed to Job, the wings and feathers of the ostrich are compared with those of the stork ; “ Gavest thou the goodly wings unto the peacocks, or wings and feathers unto the ostrich ;” or as it is rendered by the learned Bochart, and after him by Dr Shaw : “ the plumage of the stork.” Natural historians inform us, that the wings are tipped with black, and a part of the head and thighs are adorned with feathers of the same colour ; the rest of the body is white. Albert says, the stork has black wings, the tail, and other parts white ; while Turner asserts, that the wings are white, spotted with black. From these different accounts, it is evident that the feathers of the stork are black and white, and not always disposed in the same manner.

She constructs her nest with admirable skill, of dry twigs from the forest, and coarse grass from the marsh ; but, wisely yielding to circumstances, she does not confine herself to one situation. At one time she selects for her dwelling the pinnacle of a deserted tower, or the canal

^b Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, p. 327. Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. x, cap. 23. Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. iii, cap. 23, and lib. x, cap. 16.

Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. vii, p. 259.

of an ancient aqueduct ; at another, the roof of a church or dwelling house. She frequently retires from the noise and bustle of the town, into the circumjacent fields ;^d but she never builds her nest on the ground. She chooses the highest tree of the forest for her dwelling ; but always prefers the fir, when it is equally suitable to her purpose.^e This fact is clearly stated by the Psalmist, in his meditation on the power of God : “ As for the stork, the fir trees are her house.”^f In another passage, the Psalmist calls the nest of the sparrow her house : “ Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young.”^g In the use of this beautiful figure, the inspired bard is supported by one of the highest human authorities :

“ Antiquasque domos avium cum stirpibus imis
Eruit.” *Gcor.* lib. ii, l. 209.

But the term house is not used in these passages, merely by a figure of speech ; if the description of ancient writers be true, it is in every respect the most proper and expressive that can be selected. The stork chooses the site of her dwelling with much care and intelligence ; she combines her materials with great art, and prosecutes her plan with surprising exactness. After the structure is finished, she examines it on all sides, tries its firmness and solidity, supplies any defect she may discover, and with admirable industry, reduces with her bill an unsightly projection, or ill-adjusted twig, till it perfectly correspond with her instinctive conception of safety, neatness, and comfort.^h

^d Varro de Re Rust. lib. iii, c. 5. ^e Shaw's Trav. vol. ii, p. 272.

^f Psa. civ, 17.

^g Psa. lxxxiv, 3.

^h Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. vii, p. 244.

The inspired writer alludes to this bird, with an air of constant and intimate acquaintance: "As for the stork, the fir tree is her house." We learn from the narrative of Doubdan,ⁱ that the fields between Cana and Nazareth are covered with numerous flocks of them, each flock containing, according to his computation, more than a thousand. In some parts, the ground is entirely whitened by them; and on the wing, they darken the air like a congeries of clouds. At the approach of evening, they retire to roost on the trees. The inhabitants carefully abstain from hurting them, on account of their important services in clearing the country of venomous animals.^j

The annual migration of this bird, did not escape the notice of the prophet Jeremiah, who employs it with powerful effect for the purpose of exposing the stupidity of God's ancient people: "Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed time, and the turtle, the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord."^k They know, with unerring precision, the time when it is necessary for them to remove from one place to another, and the region whither they are to bend their flight; but the people of God, that received many special revelations from heaven, and enjoyed the continual instructions of his prophets, had become so depraved, that they neither understood the meaning of mercies nor judgments,—they knew

ⁱ P. 513.

^j De Tott says the stork is held in veneration by the eastern nations as a sort of household god. *Memoirs*, vol. i, p. 322. And Buffon asserts that the ancients reckoned it a crime to kill a stork; and in Thessaly the murderer of one of these birds was punished by death; so precious were they held in that country, which they cleared of serpents. *Vol. vii*, p. 259.

^k Jer. viii, 7.

not how to accommodate themselves to either, nor to answer the design of heaven in such dispensations,—they knew not the signs of their times, nor what they ought to do. The stork, that had neither instructor to guide her, nor reason to reflect and judgment to determine, what was proper to be done, found no difficulty in discerning the precise time of her departure and return.¹

Some interpreters imagine, that by the phrase, “the stork in the heaven,” the prophet means to distinguish between the manner of her departure, and that of other migrating birds. The storks collect in immense numbers, and darken the air with their wide extended squadrons, as they wing their flight to other climes;^m while many other birds of passage, come and go in a more private and concealed manner. But, if this was the prophet’s design, he ought not to have introduced the crane, or our translators should have found another sense for the term which he uses; for the crane is seen pursuing her annual journey through the heavens equally as the stork, and in numbers sufficient to engage the public attention. When Dr. Chandler was in Asia, about the end of August, he saw cranes flying in vast caravans, passing high in the air, from Thrace as he supposed, on their way to Egypt. But, in the end of March, he saw them in the Lesser Asia, busily engaged in picking up reptiles, or building their nests. Some of them, he assures us, built their nests in the ruins of an old fortress; and that the return of the crane, and the beginning of the bees to work, are considered there as a sure sign that the winter is past.ⁿ

¹ Plin. Hist. Nat. lib. x, c. 23. Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. iii, c. 23.

^m Dr. Shaw’s Trav. vol. ii, p. 269.

ⁿ Chandler’s Trav. in Asia, p. 22.

The first clause of that verse then, equally suits the stork and the crane; and by consequence, the conjecture of these interpreters is unfounded. It is more natural to suppose, that the prophet alludes to the impression which the atmosphere makes upon these birds, and the hint which instinct immediately suggests, that the time of their migration is come. As soon as they feel the cold season approaching, or tepid airs beginning to soften the rigours of winter, in the open firmament of heaven, where they love to range, they perceive the necessity of making preparations for their departure, or their return. The state of the weather is the only monitor they need to prepare for their journey,—their own feelings, the only guides to direct their long and adventurous wanderings.

But it is most probable that the prophet by these words “in the heaven,” which by the structure of the clause he seems to apply exclusively to the stork, as a peculiar trait in her character, intends to express both the astonishing rapidity of her flight, when she starts for distant regions, and the amazing height to which she soars. She is beyond almost any other, a bird “in the heaven,” journeying on the very margin of ether, far above the range of the human eye.^o

From the union of the stork and the crane in the same passage, from the similarity of their form and habits of life, Harmer thinks it by no means improbable, that the Hebrew word *hasida* signifies both these, and in one word, the whole class of birds that come under the prophet’s description.^p But that respectable writer has no foundation for his opinion; the stork and the crane, although they resemble each other in several particulars, belong to dif-

^o Buffon’s Nat. Hist. vol. vii, p. 246. ^p Observ. vol. iii, p. 346.

ferent families, and are distinguished in Hebrew by different names.

The return of these birds to the south, marked the approach of winter, and the time for the mariner to lay up his frail bark; for the ancients never ventured to sea during that stormy season. Stillingfleet has given a quotation from Aristophanes, which is quite appropriate. The crane points out the time for sowing, when she flies with her warning notes to Egypt; she bids the sailor hang up his rudder and take his rest, and every prudent man provide himself with winter garments.^a On the other hand, the flight of these birds towards the north, proclaimed the approach of spring. The prophet accordingly mentions the times appointed for the stork in the plural number, which is probably used to express both the time of her coming and of her departure.

No doubt is entertained about the meaning of the second term; it is universally allowed to denote the turtle; and as the voice of the turtle and the song of the nightingale are coincident, it seems to be the prophet's intention to mark out the coming of a bird later in the spring than the *hasida*, for, according to Chardin, the nightingale begins to be heard some days later than the appearance of the stork, and marks out the beginning of spring, as the stork indicates the termination of winter.^r

The only other passage of Scripture which alludes to that bird, occurs in the fifth chapter of Zechariah:^s “Then lift I up mine eyes and looked, and behold there came out two women, and the wind was in their wings (for they had wings like the wings of a stork), and they lift up the ephah

^a Miscellaneous Tracts, p. 237.

^r Trav. vol. ii, p. 132, French edition.

^s Zech. v, 9.

between the earth and the heaven." In the vision of which these words are a part, the prophet beheld in fearful perspective, the future calamities of his nation. The ephah represented the measure of iniquity which the Jews were fast filling up by their increasing enormities. The woman whom he saw sitting in the midst of the ephah, signified the Jewish nation in their degenerate state; this woman the angel calls wickedness, the abstract being put for the concrete, the wicked people of the Jews, to whom God was about to render according to their works. Into the ephah the woman is thrust down, and a talent of lead cast upon the mouth of it, to keep her a close prisoner; denoting that the condemned sinner who has filled up the measure of his iniquity, can neither escape from the curse of God, nor endure the misery which it inflicts. The ephah containing this mystical woman, he now sees carried away into a far country; that is, the nation of the Jews overthrown, their civil and religious polity extinguished, their temple burned, their priests slain, and the poor remains of their people scattered over the face of all the earth. This great and terrible destruction is accomplished by the Roman emperors Vespasian and Titus, symbolized by "two women who had wings like a stork," which are sufficiently powerful to waft that bird to a very distant country. These symbolical women lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven; which was fulfilled when the Roman armies, with a rapidity resembling the flight of a bird of passage, came up against the Jews, now ripe for destruction, and swept them from the land of their fathers into regions far remote, from which they were not, as in the first captivity, to return after seventy years, but to remain in a state of depression and suffering for many generations.

Under the curse of incensed heaven they still remain, and must do so, till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and then all Israel shall be saved.

The Raven.

This bird is distinguished from all the feathered race, by his sable plumage, and his harsh, lugubrious note. But although black is the colour in which he generally appears, it is not equally intense on every part of his body. "In fact," says Buffon, "the black colour which prevails in this bird, seems to be mixed with violet on the upper part of the body, with ash colour on the throat, and green on the belly, under the feathers of the tail and the large pinions of the wings, and those at the greatest distance from the back."^t But the sable colour is sufficiently prominent to justify the allusions made to it in the Scriptures. It appears both from sacred and profane writers, that black was a colour held in great estimation among the ancients; it was, in their opinion, emblematical of the inscrutable nature of deity;^u which was probably the reason that many of their idols were painted of this colour. In Homer, black eyes are celebrated as a distinguishing lineament in female loveliness. They entered also into his idea of masculine beauty, and of course obtained a conspicuous place in his description of the Grecian warriors.^v Nor was black hair regarded with less admiration in the oriental regions, and in some of the adjacent countries. Apuleius praises the locks which are dark as the feathers of the raven.^w So greatly were they valued in Italy, that

^t Nat. Hist. vol. iii, p. 13.

^u Maurice's Hist. of India, vol. ii, p. 481. See also Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, p. 197, &c.

^v Iliad, lib. i, l. 99 and 389. ^w dccxii, 21.

some of the more shewy and fashionable Romans dyed their hair black, when the God of nature had refused them that honour; a fact which Martial attests in these lines:

“ Mentiris juvenem tinctis Lentine capillis,
 Tam subito corvus qui modo Cygnus eras.” *Epig. 43.*

It was no vulgar praise then, which the spouse intended, when she uttered these words: “ His locks are bushy and black as a raven;”^x or more literally, his pendulous locks are black as a raven. The raven lock, intensely black and glossy, was reckoned in those regions a mark of youthful prime, and necessary to complete the beauty of the human figure. But when our Lord appeared in vision to John the beloved disciple, “ his head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow.”^y The contradiction, however, is only apparent; for while the raven locks are meant to express the unlimited and unchangeable power of the Redeemer, the snow white hair with which he appeared to John, was an appropriate emblem of his infinite wisdom and prudence. They are both figurative representations of distinct attributes in the character of Jesus Christ, and by consequence are perfectly consistent with each other.

The raven, it is well known, delights in solitude; he frequents the ruined tower or the deserted habitation.^z Hence, to send a person to the ravens, was, among the ancient Greeks, the same as to imprecate that one might be sent away from the comforts of civil society, to encounter the wants and sufferings of solitary exile; to suffer an ignominious death; to be deprived of burial, and become a banquet to the birds of prey. The sable plumage and harsh discordant voice of that bird, serve to aggravate the horrors of desolation.^a In the prophecies of Isaiah, it is

^x Song v, 11.

^z Aristophanis in Nubibus.

^y Dan. vii, 9. Rev. i, 14.

^a Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. iii, p. 13.

accordingly foretold, that the raven, with other birds of similar dispositions, should fix his abode in the desolate houses of Edom : “ The cormorant and the bittern shall possess it ; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it ; and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion and the stones of emptiness.”^b The prophet Zephaniah, in like manner, makes the raven croak over the perpetual desolations of Nineveh : “ Both the cormorant and the bittern,” in the Septuagint and other versions, the cormorant and the raven, “ shall lodge in the upper lintels of it ; their voice shall sing in the windows ; desolation shall be in the thresholds ; for he shall uncover the cedar work.”^c In those splendid palaces, where the voice of joy and gladness was heard, and every sound which could ravish the ear and subdue the heart—silence was, for the wickedness of their inhabitants, to hold her reign for ever, interrupted only by the scream of the cormorant and the croaking of the raven.

Solomon appears to give a distinct character to some of the ravens in Palestine, when he says, “ The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.”^d The wise man in this passage, may allude to a species of raven, which prefers the valley for her habitation to the clefts of the rock ; or he may perhaps refer to some sequestered valley in the land of Promise, much frequented by these birds, which derived its name from that circumstance : or, as the rocky precipice where the raven loves to build her nest, often overhangs the torrent, (which the original word נַחַל, *nahal*, also signifies) and the lofty tree, which is equally acceptable, rises on its banks, the royal preacher might by that phrase,

^b Isa. xxxiv, 11.^c Zeph. ii, 14.^d Prov. xxx, 17.

merely intend the ravens which prefer such situations. Bochart conjectures, that the valley alluded to, was Tophet, in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, which the prophet Jeremiah calls the valley of the dead bodies; because the dead bodies of criminals were cast into it, where they remained without burial, till they were devoured by flocks of ravens, which collected for that purpose from the circumjacent country.^e If this conjecture be right, the meaning of Solomon will be this, He who is guilty of so great a crime, shall be subjected to an infamous punishment; and shall be cast into the valley of dead bodies, and shall find no grave, but the devouring maw of the impure and voracious raven. It was a common punishment in the east, (and one which the orientals dreaded above all others,) to expose in the open fields, the bodies of evil-doers that had suffered by the laws of their offended country, to be devoured by the beasts of the field, and the fowls of heaven. Hence, in Aristophanes, an old man deprecates the punishment of being exposed to the ridicule of women, or given as a banquet to the ravens; and Horace, in his sixteenth epistle, to Quintius, represents it as the last degree of degradation, to be devoured by these hateful birds.

——— “non pasces in cruce corvos.”

The wise man insinuates, that the raven makes his first and keenest attack on the eye; which perfectly corresponds with his habits, for he always begins his banquet with that part of the body. Isidore says of him, “Primo in cadaveribus oculum petit:” and Epictetus, ὅτι μὲν κοράκες τῶν τετελευτηκότων τὰς ὀφθαλμοὺς λυμαίνονται: the ravens devour the eyes of the dead.^f Many other testimonies might be

^e Bochart. Hieroz. vol. iii, lib. ii, cap. 10, p. 203.

^f Ibid. vol. iii, p. 201.

adduced ; but these are sufficient to justify the allusion in the proverb.

Impure and hateful as the raven has been accounted from the remotest ages, by all the nations of the earth, he had the honour of giving his name to a prince of Midian, who invaded the land of Israel, at the head of an immense army, in the days of Gideon ; for the word Oreb signifies a raven. It seems to have been a very common, and a very ancient custom in the east, even among persons of high rank, to give their children the names of particular animals ; and they do not appear to have been very nice in their choice. The father of Shechem, a Canaanitish prince, was called Hamor, which signifies an ass ; perhaps on account of the patience and tranquillity which marked his character, for he does not appear from his conduct, in the different negociations about Dinah the daughter of Jacob, to have been a dull or stupid person. The raven might, with some reason, seem to the Midianites, a very appropriate name for a stern and sanguinary warrior ; or the prince himself, sympathizing with the general sentiments of his nation, might assume it, in order to strike his enemies with greater terror. Another prince who shared his honours and his misfortunes, took the no less appropriate name of Zeeb, or the wolf, probably for the same reason. The skilful and intrepid hunter, admiring the indefatigable perseverance and activity which the raven displays in pursuing his prey, might for a similar reason assume his name ; for Corax, or the raven, is the name of a hunter, in Homer, who lost his life by falling from the top of a rock, while too eagerly urging the chase :

Παρ Κορακος πίπην ἐπὶ τῇ κρήνῃ Ἀρεθύσῃ. *Odyss.* lib. xiii, l. 408.

The singular custom is still practised among the savage

tribes of North America, to whom it has been transmitted through the lapse of many generations from their progenitors, that first emigrated into the western continent from the shores of Asia.

Every species of food is acceptable to the raven; but he prefers the flesh of animals.^g A vile and disgusting bird, he hovers near the field of battle, in expectation of gorging himself with the slain; he attends at the place of execution, to feed upon the bodies of malefactors; he watches the habitations of disease and infection, to riot on the putrid carcase; and when these resources fail, he marks the lamb and other weak defenceless animals, and preys on living flesh. It is pretended, that he will even attack larger animals with success; and supplying what is deficient in strength, by cunning and activity, will fasten upon the backs of wild cattle, and eat them alive and in detail, after having picked out their eyes.^h What renders his ferocity more odious, is, that it is not in him as in some other animals the effect of necessity, but a desire of carnage; as he can subsist on fruits and seeds of every kind, on insects of every name, and even, it is said, on poisonous matters, so that no animal so well deserves the name of omnivorous. If to these base and truculent dispositions, we add his lugubrious plumage, his harsh and mournful note, his ignoble mein, his ferocious look, infection exhaling from his whole body,—we shall not be surprised, that in every age of the world, and among every people, he has been regarded as an object of aversion; that he was pronounced an unclean bird by the Jewish

^g Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. x, cap. 13 and 14.

^h Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. ii, cap. 51. Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. iii, p. 18.

lawgiver, and the use of his flesh prohibited among the holy people.^h

To some it may appear surprising, that so vile and abject a creature should be so frequently recognized in Scripture, as an object of care to the Maker and Preserver of all things. When the most High challenged Job out of the whirlwind, he demanded: "Who provideth for the raven his food? When his young ones cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat."ⁱ In the songs of the temple, it is stated as an argument for praising God, that "he giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry."^j Our Lord, in the New Testament, directing his disciples to trust in God for their daily subsistence, bids them "consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which neither have store-house nor barn; and God feedeth them." The ravens do not abandon their young, as some ancient authors pretend; but cherish them with as much care and attention as other birds generally do, till they are able to provide in some degree for themselves. They are sometimes, however, driven rather prematurely from the nest, before they have attained sufficient vigour and skill to subsist by their own industry; in this case, pinched with hunger, and abandoned by their parents, they fill the air with their querulous clamours, as it were, complaining to God concerning their destitute and helpless condition.^k In these straits, divine providence condescends to relieve their sufferings,

^h Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. x, cap. 14 and 15. Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. i, cap. 48; lib. ii, cap. 51; and lib. iii, cap. 9. Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, cap. 10, p. 201. Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. iii, p. 13-15.

ⁱ Job. xxxix, 3.

^j Psa. cxlvii, 9.

^k Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. x, cap. 15. Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, c. 11, p. 204.

not as the Rabinical and Arabian writers pretend, by creating on the spot innumerable swarms of gnats and flies, more than sufficient to suffice their craving appetites ; but by exciting their instinctive sagacity, to greater and more skilful exertions to procure the necessary supplies. The young lions have often to encounter the same difficulties ; they “ lack and suffer hunger,” in consequence of which, “ they roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God.”¹ Nor do they cry in vain ; the almighty Benefactor opens his hand, “ they are filled with good,” every want is supplied, every desire satisfied. But the care of providence is not confined to the young ; it extends also to the parents, that like their brood, “ neither sow nor reap, have neither storehouse nor barn ;” and supplies them with food from his inexhaustible stores. Whatever may be their character and habits, they are the work of infinite wisdom and power ; and if it be not unbecoming the almighty Creator to make such creatures, it cannot be unbecoming to provide for their support. They too have their sphere of action, and their qualities and instincts are usefully employed both for themselves and the other parts of the terrestrial creation ; even the meanness of their character is of no small advantage to the considerate mind, in allaying his fears, and in exciting and establishing his confidence in the wise and bountiful arrangements of providence. The argument of our Lord, is exceedingly strong and pointed. If the Almighty hear not in vain the croaking of a young raven, he surely will not turn a deaf ear to the supplications of his own people.

The raven was the first messenger which Noah sent out, to see if the waters of the flood were abated. The Jewish

¹ Psa. xxxiv, 11, and civ, 21.

writers say, that he did not venture far from the ark, but kept flying about it, and soon sought a resting place either within it among his former associates, or upon the covering. But the Greek writers uniformly maintain, that he left the ark and never returned; and the most eminent Latin fathers adopt the same opinion. Some have endeavoured to reconcile these contradictory assertions, by saying, that the raven returned to the ark, but did not resume his former place in the division allotted to the feathered tribes. But the attempt is vain; for the Hebrew writers expressly say, the raven returned to the ark; and the Greek writers, in terms equally precise, that he returned no more. The sentiment of the Hebrew writers is undoubtedly countenanced by the text, which does not indeed say, that the raven returned to the ark, although it is plainly understood: He “went forth, going and returning until the waters were dried up from the earth;” that is, he often went and returned. Now, if the raven often went out of the ark, he must have often returned to it, as the sacred writer seems to intimate. The Chaldee paraphrasts, Jonathan and Onkelos, and the Samaritan interpreter, all view the text in the same light, and render it, He “went forth going and returning.” The Arabic version, edited at Paris, gives the same sense; He went forth and returned.

Bochart inclines to the opinion of the Grecian writers, that the raven returned no more; and he supposes they read the text with a negative, which has been omitted by the carelessness of some transcriber, וְלֹא יָשׁוּב, and he returned not again. The future is used for the preterite, which is quite common in the Scriptures; and of which twenty examples at least may be found in the hundred

seventh Psalm. Nor do the phrases יצוא ושוב and ישוב וילוא differ much in the writing ; for the letters *vau* and *yod*, in ancient manuscripts are so similar, as to be very often exchanged ; and the *lamed* differs very little from the *tsade*, except in the horn, which in the latter descends from the right side ; while in the former it rises above the line on the left side ; and this Bochart is inclined to believe is the real origin of the different reading and interpretation of these words.^m

But this solution evidently proceeds upon a mere gratuitous assumption, that some transcriber has made not fewer than three blunders in writing two words in the same clause, which is not very probable ; and still less probable that the corrupted text should escape the notice of the Chaldee paraphrasts, and other learned writers. We ought so to venerate the Hebrew text as never to depart from it without the most obvious necessity ; for if it may be altered for the sake of an ingenious conjecture, (as Bochart candidly admits his emendation to be,) or a more perspicuous reading, the authority of the sacred Scriptures, as the supreme rule of faith and manners, will soon be destroyed. It is better, therefore, to abide by the text in its present state, till the existence of corruption be established by satisfactory proof. Bochart objects to the obscurity of the received text : “ Which went forth to and fro ;” or going and returning ; but the sense which is commonly given by many critics and expositors, is sufficiently clear and precise. It embraces two things ; the departure of the raven from the ark, expressed by the verb in the future tense ; and his conduct afterwards, expressed by the infinitive absolute, going and returning, sometimes

^m Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, cap. 13, p. 212.

making an excursion to the tops of the mountains, which began to rise above the surface of the waters, and at other times returning to rest upon the ark, or to resume his place within. We may not be able to assign the reason why Noah suffered the raven to go and return, and to wander about fifty days without success, after he had learned from the dove all he wanted to know; yet the fact may be certain. Many events have actually taken place, for which, owing to the remoteness of the age in which they happened, and our ignorance of circumstances, no satisfactory reason can be assigned. But the true reason seems to be this, the raven did not return into the ark, but only rested upon it. This solution, which, after all Bochart has said to the contrary, seems neither inconsistent with the words of Moses, nor the nature of things, entirely removes the difficulty.

The natural habits of this bird, and the state of the world, are both favourable to the idea that he did not return into the ark. It is well known that he delights to wade in the mire, and to feed on carrion; and by consequence, he could be at no loss for a resting place, and for subsistence, after the waters began to subside. The dove which Noah sent out perhaps at the same time, or a few days afterwards, on the same errand, found herself in very different circumstances. She could not rest on the slimy tops of the mountains, nor feed on the carcasses of men and animals, which were floating on the surface of the deep. To avoid being drowned in the waters, or dying of hunger on the covering of the ark, she was compelled to return, and take shelter under the protection of Noah. This is stated in the clearest terms by the sacred historian: "But the dove found no rest for the sole of her

foot, and she returned unto him into the ark; for the waters were on the face of the whole earth; then he put forth his hand and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark." But the raven not being under the same necessity, declined the services of the benevolent patriarch, roving on the summits of Ararat, or perching on the roof of his former abode, till the waters retired from the face of the ground, and the imprisoned animals were dismissed, to resume, upon the earth or in the air, their former habits.

It is a singular circumstance, that the raven, an unclean bird, and one too of very gross and impure dispositions, was chosen by Jehovah to provide for his servant Elijah, when he concealed himself, by the divine command, from the fury of Ahab. So improbable is the story in the ear of reason, that morose and voracious ravens should become caterers for the prophet, that some interpreters have maintained that the original word denotes merchants or Arabians, or the inhabitants of the city Arbo: according to this interpretation, the promise would run; I have commanded the Arabs or the Orebim to nourish thee.ⁿ But it is easy to shew that these opinions have no foundation in Scripture and reason. The prophet Ezekiel indeed describes the merchants of Tyre by the phrase (ערבי מערובך,) arbi mearobeha, "thy merchants who transact thy business;" but the word orebim (ערבים) by itself, never signifies merchants. Nor had God said in general, I have commanded the merchants, but I have commanded the merchants of this or that place, to nourish thee. The situation of the place in which the miracle happened, refutes the other opinions; for in the neighbourhood of Jordan, where

ⁿ 1 Kings i, 17.

Elias concealed himself, were no Arabs, no Orebim, and no city which bore the name of Arbo. Besides, the Arabs are not called in Hebrew (עֲרָבִים) orebim, but (עֲרָבִים) arbim, and the inhabitants of Arbo, if any city of that name existed, according to the genius of the Hebrew language, must have been called (עֲרָבוֹיִם,) arabojim, not orebim. Add to this, Elias was commanded to hide himself there; but how could he hide himself, if the inhabitants of the city or encampment knew of his retreat, as they must have done, if his daily subsistence depended upon their bounty. The place of his retreat must have been discovered in a very short time to Ahab, who sought him with great industry in every direction. The solemn declaration of Obadiah to the prophet, when he went by the divine command to shew himself to the king, proves how impossible it was for him to remain concealed in the inhabited part of the country: “As the Lord thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee; and when they said, he is not there, he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not.”^o Hence these *haorebim* were not merchants, nor human beings of any station or employment, but true ravens; and so the term has been rendered by the whole Christian church, and by many Jewish writers, particularly by their celebrated historian Josephus.^p

These voracious and impure animals received a commandment from their Maker to provide for his prophet by the brook Cherith, near its confluence with the Jordan. The record is couched in these terms: “Get thee hence and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan: and it shall be that thou

^o Ch. xviii, 10.

^p Antiq. b. viii, ch. 13, sec. 2.

shalt drink of the brook ; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.”^q In the history of providence, such commands are by no means uncommon ; the locust, the serpent, and the fishes of the sea, have all in their turn received a charge to do the will of their Almighty Creator. Thus he promised to Solomon at the dedication of the temple: “ If I command the locusts to devour the land --- if my people which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wickedness ; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”^r The marine serpent that lurks in the deepest caverns of the ocean, in like manner hears his voice, and submits to his authority ; for Jehovah directed the prophet to address his guilty countrymen in these memorable terms : “ Though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them.”^s Nor was the great fish which he prepared to swallow up the refractory prophet, less prompt in its obedience : “ And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.”^t His providence extends its powerful influence even to inanimate objects : “ I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their hosts have I commanded.”^u And David, in the Spirit, complained of his ancestors, that “ they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation ; though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven.”^v Even the furious billows of the sea dare not pass the line which his finger has traced, without his permission : “ I made the cloud the garment thereof, and

^q 1 Kings xvii, 3.^s Amos ix, 3.^u Isa. xlv, 12.^r 2 Chron. vii, 14.^t Jon. ii, 10.^v Psal. lxxviii, 23.

thick darkness a swaddling band for it, and brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors, and said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.”^w The inanimate and irrational parts of creation, properly speaking, cannot receive and execute the commands of the Almighty; they are only passive instruments employed by him in his providential dispensations, to produce certain effects. To command the ravens then, is to make use of them in providing for the necessities of his servant; to impart for a time an instinctive care to supply him with food, to which they were by nature entire strangers, and which they ceased to feel when the end was accomplished. A command to sustain the destitute seer, after the brook of which he drank was dried up, was addressed in a very different manner to the widow of Zarephath. It was couched in words addressed to her understanding and heart, while the secret power of Jehovah inclined her to yield a prompt and efficacious obedience.

On this occasion, a number of ravens were employed, because the service of one was not sufficient to supply the prophet with daily food. But the circumstance entirely accords with the native instincts of that bird; for the ravens go in quest of their prey in troops, and share in common the spoils of the chase. Following, therefore, the instincts of their nature, which received for a time a peculiar direction, by the miraculous interposition of Jehovah, a number of ravens associated together, in order to supply the wants of Elijah, whom his country had abandoned to the rage of an impious and cruel monarch; “And they brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and

^w Job xxxviii, 12.

bread and flesh in the evening, and he drank of the brook." The Septuagint, in many copies read the passage; "They brought bread in the morning, and flesh in the evening;" but the common reading is entitled to the preference. It gives a striking display of divine goodness, that when the whole resources of Israel were exhausted by a long and severe famine, the prophet of the Lord was miraculously and abundantly supplied with nutritious food twice every day. The ravens brought it in the evening and in the morning, which were the stated hours of repast, among the jews and other oriental nations.

The Hebrew writers eagerly inquire where the ravens found the provisions to supply the wants of Elijah; and, as may be supposed, very different are the opinions they advance; but on this question, which is of little importance, no certainty can be obtained. The Scriptures are silent on the subject, and we have no other means of information. It was enough for the prophet, that his winged providers regularly supplied his necessities; and it is sufficient to excite our admiration of the power and goodness of God, and our confidence in his providential care, without attempting to discover what the divine wisdom has seen meet to conceal. On another occasion, an angel was sent from heaven to supply the exhausted prophet with bread and water in the desert; which, in the eye of reason, may seem to be a more becoming messenger of the king of glory, than a raven. But "the ways of God are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts; he did not think it beneath his dignity at this time, to employ the ravens in the same office; and he perhaps intended to teach us, that all creatures are equally subject

to his authority, and fit for his purpose. When he gives the commandment, a raven is as successful in his service, according to the range of its faculties, as an angel ; and we must not presume to refuse or slight his aid, how mean soever the agent he condescends to employ. The Jewish legislator placed the raven in the list of unclean birds, which imparted pollution to every thing they touched ; but the same God who gave the law, had a right to repeal or suspend it ; and that he did suspend it for a time, in favour of his persecuted servant, cannot be reasonably denied. Nor was this a singular instance of divine clemency ; for the observance of ceremonial institutions often yielded to urgent necessity. The Jews were forbidden to touch a dead carcase ; but Samson was allowed, for a special purpose, to eat of the honey which he found in the dead lion. The priests only were permitted by the law to eat the shew bread ; yet David, and his men, were justified by our Lord himself in using the consecrated loaves, when no other could be procured.

Many are the reasons assigned by different writers, for the employment of ravens on this occasion ; but they are so trifling, or so fanciful, that it is unnecessary to state them ; the true reason perhaps was to convince the dejected prophet, that although his nation had forsaken him, the God whom he served continued to watch over him with unceasing care ; and that he would employ the most unpromising means, and counteract the most powerful instincts, rather than suffer him to want the necessaries of life. And when he saw those voracious birds, the cravings of whose appetite are seldom entirely satisfied, part, of their own accord, with their favourite provision, morning and evening, for many days, and bring it themselves

to the place of his retreat ; he could not mistake or disregard the secret influence under which they acted.

The brook Cherith, on whose border the miracle was wrought, is supposed to be the same as the river Kana, mentioned in the sixteenth and seventeenth chapters of Joshua, which watered the confines of Ephraim and Benjamin. This brook derived its name Kana, from the reeds, which, in great abundance, clothed its banks ; among which the prophet found a secure retreat from the persecution of his enemies. Its other name Cherith, may be traced to the verb Charah, which the Greek interpreters render to feed, because on its margin the prophet was fed by the ravens. Were this conjecture true, the name must have been given by anticipation ; for which no satisfactory reason can be assigned. It is more natural to suppose, that, as the verb commonly signifies to dig, and sometimes to rush on with violence, the name Cherith alludes to the violent rapidity of the stream at certain seasons of the year, or to the deep pits, which, like many other torrents in those regions, it excavates in its furious course. The particular situation of this brook is more distinctly marked by the sacred historian, who says, it “ is before Jordan.” This phrase seems to mean, that it flowed into the Jordan ; and from the second clause of the verse we may infer, that its course lay on the west side of the river, because it is said by God to Elijah, “ Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan :” for Elijah must have been on the west side of Jordan, when he was commanded to go eastward to a stream that flowed into the Jordan on that side.

The Hawk.

This bird is distinguished by the swiftness of her flight, and the rapid motion of her wings in flying. But as it is the first of these which naturally fixes the attention of an observer, the Hebrews, according to their invariable custom, selected it as the reason of the name by which she is known in their language; they call her (נץ) nets, from the verb natsa, to fly. She was reckoned, by many of the ancients, the swiftest of the feathered race. In Homer, the descent of Apollo from heaven, is compared to her flight:

——— ἰσηκεὶ εὐίκαω

Ωκεὶ φασσοφονῶ, ὡς ὠκιστὸς πετεηνῶν.

Il. lib. xv, l. 237.

“From the mountains of Ida he descended like a swift hawk, the destroyer of pigeons, that is the swiftest of birds.”

In the thirteenth book, Ajax tells Hector, the day should come when he would wish to have horses swifter than hawks, to carry him back to the city.

Θασσονας ἰσηκῶν εἶμεναι καλλιῆριχας ἵππους.

l. 819.

Among the Egyptians, the hawk was the symbol of the winds; a sure proof that they contemplated with great admiration, the rapidity of her motions. For the same reason, according to some writers, she was consecrated to the sun, which she resembles in the surprising swiftness of her career, and the facility with which she moves through the boundless regions of the sky.^x This custom of consecrating the hawk to Apollo, the Greeks borrowed from the Egyptians, among whom no animal was so sacred as the ibis and the hawk. So great was their veneration for these animals, that if any person killed one of them, with or without design, he was punished with death; while for

^x Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. i, p. 182.

the destruction of any other animal, he was only subjected to an arbitrary fine.^y

This bird, so highly venerated among the heathen, was pronounced unclean by the Jewish lawgiver; it was to be an abomination to the people of Israel; its flesh was not to be eaten, nor its carcase touched with impunity. The reason of this law may probably be found in her dispositions and qualities; she is a bird of prey, and, by consequence, cruel in her temper, and gross in her manners. Her mode of living too, may probably impart a disagreeable taste and flavour to the flesh, and render it, particularly in a warm climate, improper for the table. Nor do we know that it was ever relished by any people, although the pressure of necessitous circumstances may have occasionally reconciled individuals to use it for food. Her daring spirit, her thirst of blood, the surprising rapidity of her flight, and her perseverance in the chase, soon pointed her out to the hunter as a valuable assistant; but even he willingly resigns her carcase to be meat to the beasts of the field.^z

Of this bird Jehovah demands, "Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom, and stretch her wings toward the south?" Jerome and several other interpreters render the words, By thy prudence doth the hawk renew her plumage, having expanded her wings towards the south; because the verb (אבר) *abar*, in the future of the Hiphil, seems to be formed from the noun (אבר) *Æber*, or (אברה) *Æbrah*, which signifies a feather. This law, by which the eagle, the hawk,

^y Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, p. 192. Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. vii, cap. 9, and lib. x, cap. 14 and 24. Herod. lib. i.

^z Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. ii, cap. 42, and lib. x, cap. 14. Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. x, cap. 10.

and other birds, annually shed their feathers, was not contrived by the wisdom of man ; although it appears he is able, by certain managements, to accelerate the moulting season, as well as the renovation of the plumage. But, as means and remedies derive all their efficacy from God, and depend for success only upon his co-operation, it may still be demanded, Doth the hawk renew her plumage by thy wisdom, expanding her wings towards the south ? It is said, by an ancient writer on this passage, that humid and warm places are favourable to this change, and are therefore diligently sought for by hawkers, with the view of promoting the moulting of their falcons. When the south wind blows, the wild hawks, instructed by their instinctive sagacity, expand their wings till their limbs become heated ; and by this means, the old plumage is relaxed, and the moulting facilitated. But when the south wind refuses its aid, they expand their wings to the rays of the sun, and, shaking them violently, produce a tepid gale for themselves ; and thus their bodies being heated, and their pores opened, the old feathers more easily fall off, and new ones grow up in their place.

But it is more probable that these words refer, not to the annual renovation of the plumage, but to the long and persevering flight of the hawk towards the south, on the approach of winter. Her migration is not conducted by the wisdom and prudence of man ; but by the superintending and upholding providence of the only wise God. The words of Jehovah cannot be understood as referring to the falconer's art ; for we have no evidence that the hawk was employed in hunting, till many ages after the times in which the patriarchs flourished. Besides, if the divine challenge referred to that amusement, the direction

of her flight could not be confined to the south; for she pursues the game to every quarter of heaven.

The renowned Chrysostom on this passage inquires, why Jehovah has made no mention of sheep and oxen, and other animals of the same kind, but only of useless creatures, which seem to have been formed for no beneficial or important purpose. But is it to be supposed, that God, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working, has made any part of his works in vain? We may not be able to discover, after the most careful investigation, the end which the Almighty had in view, when he created some of his works; but shall we presume on this account to pronounce them useless or insignificant? So far from being a useless bird, the hawk in some cases, brings the most important and effectual assistance to the hunter. It has already been observed, that the antelope, which seems rather to fly than to run, leaves the swiftest dog far behind; and could never be overtaken without the help of the falcon. The hawk then, is not the useless and insignificant creature which the Greek father represents her; on the contrary, she has conferred benefits on mankind of no inconsiderable value.²

² Plin. Hist. Natur. lib. x, cap. 8 and 43.

CHAP. XI.

HARMLESS BIRDS.

The Dove.—The Swallow.—The Crane.—The Partridge.

The Dove.

THE allusions in the sacred volume to this bird, are both numerous and important. She was known to the ancient Hebrews by the name (יוֹנָה) yona, perhaps, says the learned Bochart, to intimate, that she is a native of Greece; for the Greeks were anciently called (Ἴωνες) Iones, as has been already proved; and in Hebrew (יוֹנִים) yonim, or Javanim, that is the sons of Javan, the father of the colony which settled in those parts.^a One thing is certain, if any conclusion may be drawn from the fabulous history of Greece, that the dove has resided in that country from the remotest antiquity. Herodotus mentions a very ancient tradition among the Greeks, that the Dodonæan dove, taking her place on a spreading beech, pronounced with human voice, that it was in the decree of the fates, that an oracle of Jupiter should be established there; which was by far the most ancient of all the oracles in Greece.^b Another is recorded by Plutarch, which was evidently transmitted from the mountains of Ararat; and proves that Deucalion was no other than the patriarch Noah, the second father of our species: That a dove sent from the ark by the former, was a sign of tempest when she returned, and of serenity when she departed.^c The

^a Hieroz. lib. i, p. 17.

^b Lib. ii, cap. 55.

^c Langhorne's Plutarch, vol. iii, p. 61.

Greeks have another tradition, that, in the island of Crete, doves nourished Jupiter with ambrosia, brought from the streams of the ocean; a story which may be traced with ease to this line of their great poet:

αμβροσίην Διὶ πατρὶ φέρουσιν. *Odys. lib. xii, l. 63.*

“They bring ambrosia to father Jove.”

When the Argonauts were about to attempt a passage among the rocky isles of the Thracian Bosphorus, they were advised by the prophet Phineas, to send out a dove; which, if she passed them in safety, they might follow.^d In the second book of the Iliad, several cities in Bœotia, and the Peloponnesus, are celebrated for their innumerable flocks of doves; and a cluster of islands near Smyrna, were for the same reason called Peristerides, or the pigeon islands.^e From this statement it may be inferred, that the dove came into Greece and the surrounding countries, very soon after the flood.

It is evident from the Scriptures, that Syria, from the earliest postdiluvian times, abounded with doves. When Abraham was received into covenant with God, not many generations after the flood, he offered in sacrifice, by the divine command, a turtle dove, and a young pigeon.^f And, in the law of Moses, the sacrifice of turtle doves, and young pigeons, is every where prescribed. It is alleged from Ctesias, by Diodorus,^g and R. Azarias, a Jewish writer, that Semiramis, the far-famed queen of Babylon, derived her name from the note of the turtle; for it may be traced to (זמיר,) zemir, the song of birds, and particularly of the dove. Thus in the Song, “The time (זמיר,) of the singing of birds is come, and the voice

^d Bochart. Hieroz. lib. i, cap. 1, p. 4, vol. iii.

^e Ibid. l. 502, &c.

^f Gen. xv, 9.

^g 66, a, 76, c.

of the turtle is heard in our land.”^g The dove was long regarded by the orientals, and particularly by the Assyrians, probably on account of her services to Noah and his family, with great veneration. A golden dove adorned the head of the Syrian goddess, and shared in the honours of that pretended deity. From the time of Semiramis, who, in the fabulous history of Assyria, was in a wonderful manner nourished and preserved by an immense flock of doves, that beautiful bird was actually worshipped as a goddess. This fact, which Ctesias records, is attested by Xenophon, who declares, that the inhabitants of Syria would not suffer them to be molested.^h The infatuated people looked upon them as the most sacred of the feathered race; and thought it unlawful even to touch them. The use of these birds was by law prohibited to the Syrians, from the earliest times; and, while they made no scruple to eat other fowls, they carefully abstained from the dove; because she was not only sacred to their principal goddess, but was herself elevated to the rank of a divinity, and numbered among the gods.ⁱ A figure of the same bird, surrounded with the rainbow, in allusion to the flood, waved in the banners of the Assyrian monarchs. To that symbol, the prophet Jeremiah undoubtedly refers in these words: “Their land is desolate, because of the fierceness of the oppressor;” strictly, the fierceness of the dove, “and because of his fierce anger.” And in another part of the prophecy: “Arise, and let us go again to our own people, and to the land of our nativity, from the oppressing sword;” (חֶרֶב חַיִּינָה,) from the sword of the dove.—“For fear of the oppressing sword, (the sword of

^g Song ii, 12. ^h Anab. lib. i, cap. 4, sec. 9.

ⁱ Bochart. Hieroz. vol. iii, lib. i, cap. 1, p. 5, 6.

the dove,) they shall turn every one to his people, and they shall flee every one to his own land.”^j Another allusion to the symbol which was blazoned on the standard of the Assyrian monarchs, occurs in the prophecies of Zephaniah, where Jerusalem is called the dove; because in her conduct she resembled Babylon, the capital of their empire: “Woe to her that is filthy and polluted, to the city (that resembles) the dove.”^k

The conclusion to which these statements lead, is obvious and incontrovertible, that in Syria, as in Greece, the dove had fixed her dwelling in every age. Bochart indeed admits, that the era of her appearance in Syria and the neighbouring countries, is involved in some obscurity. Although it is quite clear from the laws of Moses respecting sacrifice, that she was common in those parts in his time; yet it may be questioned whether Abraham, when he entered into covenant with Jehovah, did offer in sacrifice a young pigeon; because the original term (גוזל) gozal, signifies the young of the dove properly so called, of the turtle, of the wood pigeon, and other varieties of that species. But, since the turtle is uniformly joined with the pigeon, in the Mosaic laws respecting sacrifice, which were dictated by Jehovah himself, the God of Abraham and his posterity, it can scarcely be doubted, that the gozal, which the patriarch offered by the divine command on that memorable occasion, was in reality a young pigeon. It is there joined with the turtle; its blood is shed in order to ratify the covenant on which the whole Mosaic dispensation rested, to which all succeeding sacrifices, under the law, had a reference; it was therefore, strictly, the young of a dove. And, besides, if Syria did

^j Jer. xxv, 38, and xlvi, 16, and l, 16.

^k See Bochart. Hieroz. lib. i, p. 19.

not lie directly in the road from the mountain on which the ark rested, to Greece, it was certainly not far distant. It is therefore to be expected, that the dove would appear in Syria, and in Greece, nearly about the same time.

The doves of Semiramis, our learned author considers as involved in equal uncertainty. The later Syrians worshipped (יונים) yonim, or domestic doves, in honour of Semiramis; but it was the wood pigeons, as may be gathered from Ctesias, that guarded the infancy of that potent queen; for the places which they frequented, says that writer, were desert and stony. Hence, the name of Semiramis, which was borrowed from that circumstance, is explained by Hesychius, the mountain dove. Nor can it be determined from the history of that sovereign, in what age the dove began to frequent the plains of Syria and Palestine, because the time when she flourished is very uncertain. According to Ctesias, a very fabulous writer, she was the wife of Ninus, who reigned at Babylon, in the days of Abraham. But others make her the daughter of Beloch, who flourished more than five hundred years later than Ninus. Herodotus brings her down within two hundred years of the elder Cyrus, who swayed the sceptre more than fifteen hundred years after the death of Ninus, the supposed husband of Semiramis.¹ This powerful and victorious queen, who subjected so many nations to her dominion, and shook the earth with the terror of her name, did not govern at Babylon in the time of Abraham, but Amraphel, a petty prince, and one of the confederate kings who invaded the vale of Sodom, whom Abraham surprised on their retreat, and completely defeated.

¹ 65, c, 66, c.

Bochart also doubts the truth of the story told by some writers, respecting the figure of a dove blazoned on the banners of the Assyrian kings, because no ancient author can be cited in whose works it is recorded. And it is most probable that Cyrus, after the conquest of Babylon, retained the same military ensigns under which his ancestors, the Medes and Assyrians, had been accustomed to combat. It appears from Xenophon, that their ensign was a golden eagle raised upon a long spear, which was adopted by all the kings of Persia; and he contends that the texts quoted from the prophecies of Jeremiah, allude not to the dove, as many writers have supposed, but to the severe oppression which his people had to suffer from the Assyrian arms.^m It cannot, however, be doubted, that the dove was long a favourite emblem among the Assyrians; was held in great veneration, and even worshipped as a goddess in Syria; though it may be difficult to ascertain at what precise time the idolatrous custom was introduced.

The dove is universally admitted to be one of the most beautiful objects in nature. The brilliancy of her plumage, the splendor of her eye, the innocence of her look, the excellence of her dispositions, and the purity of her manners, have been the theme of admiration and praise in every age.ⁿ To the snowy whiteness of her wings, and the rich golden hues which adorn her neck,^o the inspired Psalmist alludes in these elegant strains: "Though ye have lien among the pots, yet ye shall be as the wings of

^m Bochart. Hieroz. vol. iii, lib. i, cap. 1, p. 7 and 8.

ⁿ Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. x, cap. 52. Varro de Re Rust. lib. iii, cap. 7. Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. iii, c. 15. Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. i, p. 435.

^o Plin. Hist. Nat. lib. x, cap. 26, and lib. xxxvii, cap. 5.

a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.”^p These bold figures do not seldom occur in the classical poets of antiquity. Virgil celebrates the *argenteus anser*, the silver coloured goose;^q Ovid, the crow which once rivalled the dove in whiteness;^r Lucretius, the changeful hues of her neck, which she turns to the sun-beam, as if conscious of its unrivalled beauty.^s

Mr. Harmer is of opinion, that the holy Psalmist alludes, not to an animal adorned merely by the hand of nature, but to the doves that were consecrated to the Syrian deities, and ornamented with trinkets of gold; and agreeably to this view, he interprets the passage, “Israel is to me as a consecrated dove; and though your circumstances have made you rather appear like a poor dove, blackened by taking up its abode in a smoky hole of the rock; yet shall ye become beautiful and glorious as a Syrian silver coloured pigeon on whom some ornament of gold is put.”

But this view makes the holy Ghost speak with some approbation, or at least without censure, of a heathenish rite, and even to borrow from it a figure to illustrate the effects of divine favour among his chosen people. No other instance of this kind occurs in the sacred Scriptures, and therefore it cannot be admitted here without much stronger evidence than that respectable writer has produced. It is much more natural to suppose, that the Psalmist alludes to parti-coloured doves with white wings, and the rest of their feathers of a bright brown. Buffon mentions a species of turtle dove in the bay of Campeachy, which is entirely brown, while others are of a snowy white;

^p Psa. lxxviii, 13.

^r Met. lib. ii, Fable 7.

^q Æneid. lib. viii, l. 655.

^s Book ii, verse 800.

and both Ælian and Homer mention a dove of a red or deep yellow colour resembling gold.^t To these varieties the sacred writer might refer; and the more effectually to represent the blissful effects of divine favour, might combine the beauties of each into one picture.

The surprising brightness of her eye, and the simplicity and chastity of her look, which is directed only to her mate, are selected by the Spirit of God to express the purity and fidelity of a genuine believer: “Behold thou art fair, my love; behold thou art fair; thou hast doves’ eyes.”^u A faithful index of the holiness which reigns within, they neither court the notice nor meet the glance of a strange lord; they are lifted up to heaven, and stedfastly fixed on the glorious realities of a better world. Sensible of the sin and danger of casting a wishful eye on forbidden objects, the true Christian earnestly prays, “Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way;”^v and, like Job, he makes a covenant with his eyes, that his mind may not be polluted with an unholy thought. He looks “not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

The same beautiful figure is employed to represent the peerless excellencies of the Redeemer, and particularly his infinite wisdom and knowledge, which are ever exercised for the good of his people: which are pure and holy, and in the estimation of every saint, as in their own nature,

^t Buffon’s Nat. Hist. vol. i, p. 482. Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. iv, cap. 2.

^u Song i, 15. Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. iii, cap. 44. Varro de Re Rust. lib. iii, cap. 7.

^v Psa. cxix, 37.

ineffably precious and lovely : “ His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk and fitly set.”^w The eyes of a dove, always brilliant and lovely, kindle with peculiar delight by the side of a crystal brook, for this is her favourite haunt ; here she loves to wash and to quench her thirst. But the inspired writer seems to intimate that, not satisfied with a single rivulet, she delights especially in those places which are watered with numerous streams, whose full flowing tide approaches the height of the banks, and offers her an easy and abundant supply. They seem as if they were washed with milk, from their shining whiteness ; and fitly, rather fully set, like a gem set in gold, neither too prominent nor too depressed, but so formed as with nice adaptation to fill up the socket. So precious and admirably fitted to the work of mediating between God and man, are the excellencies of Jesus Christ. God and man in one person, he is at once invested with all the attributes of deity, and all the perfections of which our nature is capable. As the eternal Son of God, he is wisdom and prudence itself ; and as the Son of man, he is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners : “ He is white and ruddy, the chief among ten thousand : yea, he is altogether lovely.”

The voice of the dove is peculiarly tender and plaintive, and bears a striking resemblance to the groan of a person in distress. This circumstance is admirably described by the elegant muse of Virgil :

“ Nec tamen interea raucae tua cura palumbes
Nec gemere aerea cessabit turtur ab ulmo.” *Ecl. i, l. 58.*

The statement of the poet is confirmed by the natural historian : “ The song of all doves is the same, consisting of

^w Song v, 12.

three strains, ending with a groan."^x The inspired bard, as may well be supposed, is not less true to nature. Hezekiah, alluding to the sickness from which he had just recovered, pours out his gratitude to Jehovah in these emphatical terms: "Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter, I did mourn as a dove; and the men of Judah thus deplore the bitter consequences of their sin; "We mourn sore like doves; we look for judgment, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far off from us:"^y in Hebrew, we groan with the groaning of the dove; that is, with a heavy and continual groaning. The prophet Ezekiel, describing the grievous lamentations of his people in the day of their destruction, employs the same figure: "But they that escape of them shall escape, and shall be on the mountains like doves of the valleys, all of them mourning every one for his iniquity."^z The hoarse and mournful cooing of the dove, gives a vivid idea of the low and murmuring complaints uttered by the dejected captives, dragged by their pitiless conqueror from the land of their fathers, to a far distant and unfriendly region. To this circumstance Nahum alludes, when he predicts the desolations of Nineveh: "Huzzab shall be led away captive; she shall be brought up, and her maids shall lead her as with the voice of doves, tabering upon their breasts."^a Pliny says the dove exults as she wings her flight through the boundless expanse of heaven, and cleaves it in various directions.^b

The sacred writers more than once allude to the flight of this bird, which they praise for its swiftness and ease.

^x Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. x, cap. 52, sec. 35; and Theocrit. Idyll. vii, l. 141.

^y Isa. xxxviii, 14, and lix, 11.

^z Ezek. vii, 16.

^a Nahum ii, 7.

^b Nat. Hist. lib. x, cap. 52, sec. 36.

“Who are these,” said Isaiah, “that fly as a cloud, and as doves to their windows?”^c In this passage, he beheld in vision, the captive Israelites liberated by the decree, and encouraged by the invitation of Cyrus, returning with the greatest alacrity to the land of their fathers; and exulting at the sight, he cries out with surprise and pleasure, “Who are these that fly as doves to their windows?” The prophet apparently supposes, that in his time, buildings for the reception of doves were very common. And this is by no means improbable; for, when Maundrell visited Palestine, dove cots were numerous in some parts of the country.^d In the neighbourhood of Ispahan are many pigeon-houses built for the sole purpose of collecting pigeons dung for manure. The extraordinary flights of pigeons which alight upon one of those buildings, furnish a good illustration of the prophet’s vision. Their great numbers and the compactness of their mass, literally look like a cloud at a distance, and obscure the sun in their passage.^e In some parts of Egypt are numerous whitened dove cotes on the tops of the houses.^f The dove flies more swiftly when she returns to the windows of these cotes, than when she leaves them; because, she hastens to revisit her young which she had left, and to distribute among them the food which she had collected. A similar passage occurs in Hosea: “They shall tremble as a dove out of Egypt; and as a dove out of the land of Assyria; and I will place them in their houses, saith the Lord.”^g They shall fly with trepidation; or, like a dove trembling for its young, or alarmed for its own safety, which puts forth its utmost speed. Phrases of this kind, are

^c Isa. lx, 8.^d Trav. p. 3.^e Morier’s Trav. vol. i, p. 141.^f Richardson’s Trav. vol. ii, p. 129.^g Hos. xi, 11.

not uncommon in the sacred writings; thus, when Samuel came to Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled at his coming; that is, they ran out with trepidation to meet him.^h A similar phrase occurs in the third chapter of Hosea: "They shall fear to the Lord and his goodness;" that is, they shall run with trepidation to the Lord and his goodness in the latter days. These verbs, (חרד) harad and (פחד) pahad, which are nearly synonymous, according to some Jewish writers, mean only to return with haste. Thus, Aben Ezra, on the last quotation from the prophecies of Hosea: "They shall return with haste to the Lord and his goodness." Instances of the same mode of speech, are not wanting in classical authors. Thus, in the ninth book of the *Æneid*:

"Ne trepidae meas, Teucri, defendere naves." 1. 114.

Of which, the meaning, according to Servius and other commentators, is, *ne festinate*; Do not make haste to defend my ships. And Livy furnishes another example, "Quisque—trepidat ad prima signa;"ⁱ every one trembles, that is, hastens to the first standards. When the prophet therefore says, "They shall tremble as a dove out of Egypt;" he means, they shall fly with the utmost speed out of Egypt, and out of the land of Assyria.

In allusion to her extraordinary swiftness, the Psalmist prays: "Oh, that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest. Lo, then I would wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest."^j The classical bards of Greece and Rome, make frequent allusions to her surprising rapidity, and adorn their lines with many beautiful figures from the manner in which she flies. Sophocles compares the speed with which she cleaves the

^h ויחרדו לקראתו. 1 Sam. xvi, 4.

ⁱ Lib. xxiii.

^j Psa. lv, 7.

ætherial clouds, to the impetuous rapidity of the whirlwind; and Euripides, the furious impetuosity of the Bacchanals rushing upon Pentheus, to the celerity of her motions.^k Her wonderful rapidity is celebrated by Virgil, with his usual felicity, in these lines :

“ Fertur in arva volans atque aere lapsa quieto
Radit iter liquidum celeres neque commovet alas.” *Æn.* lib. v, l. 217.

And Kimchi gives it as the reason why the Psalmist prefers the dove to other birds, that while they become weary with flying, and alight upon a rock or a tree to recruit their strength, and are taken; the dove, when she is fatigued, alternately rests one wing and flies with the other, and by this means, escape from the swiftest pursuers.^l

The orientals knew well how to avail themselves of her impetuous wing on various occasions. It is a curious fact, that she was long employed in those countries as a courier, to carry tidings of importance between distant cities. *Ælian*^m asserts, that Taurosthenes communicated to his father at *Ægina*, by a carrier pigeon, the news of his success in the Olympic games, on the very same day in which he obtained the prize. The Romans, it appears from *Pliny*, often employed doves in the same service; for *Brutus*, during the seige of *Mutina*, sent letters tied to their feet, into the camp of the consuls.ⁿ This remarkable custom has descended to modern times; *Volney* informs us, that in *Turkey* the use of carrier pigeons has been laid aside, only for the last thirty or forty years, because the *Curd* robbers killed the birds, and carried off their dispatches.

The manner of sending advice by them, was this :

^k Quoted by *Bochart*, lib. i, c. 2, p. 14.

^m *Variis*, lib. ix, c. 2.

^l *Ibid.*

ⁿ *Lib.* x, cap. 53.

They took doves which had a very young and unfledged brood, and carried them on horseback, to the place from whence they wished them to return, taking care to let them have a full view. When any advices were received, the correspondent tied a billet to the pigeon's foot, or under the wing, and let her loose. The bird, impatient to see her young, flew off with the utmost impetuosity, and soon arrived at the place of her destination. These pigeons have been known to travel from Alexandretta to Aleppo, a distance of seventy miles, in six hours, and in two days from Bagdad;^m and when taught, they never fail unless it be very dark, in which case they usually send two for fear of mistake. The poets of Greece and Rome, often allude to these winged couriers, and their surprising industry. Anacreon's dove, which he celebrates in his ninth ode, was employed to carry her master's letters; and her fidelity and dispatch, are eulogized in these lines:

Εγὼ δὲ Ἀνακρεοντι, &c.

“In such things, I minister to Anacreon; and now see what letters I bring him.”ⁿ

It is more than probable, that to this singular custom, Solomon alludes in the following passage: “Curse not the king, no not in thy thought; and curse not the rich in thy bed-chamber; for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and they which have wings, shall tell the matter.”^o

The remote antiquity of the age in which the wise man flourished, is no valid objection; for the customs and

^m Harris's Collec. of Trav. Tavernier, p. 308.

ⁿ See an amusing account of these aerial posts among the Turks in Volney's Travels, vol. i, p. 89, 363; and in Russel's Hist. of Aleppo, vol. ii, p. 203.

^o Eccl. x, 20.

usages of orientals, are almost as permanent as the soil on which they tread. Averse to change, and content for the most part with what their fathers have taught them, they transmit the lessons they have received, and the customs they have learned, with little alteration, from one generation to another. The pigeon was employed in carrying messages, and bearing intelligence, long before the coming of Christ, as we know from the odes of Anacreon and other classics; and the custom seems to have been very general, and quite familiar. When, therefore, the character of those nations, and the stability of their customs, are duly considered, it will not be reckoned extravagant to say, that Solomon in this text, must have had his eye on the carrier pigeon.^p

Her native and original dwelling is in the cave or holes of the rock. A beautiful allusion to this fact, occurs in the prophecies of Jeremiah, where he describes the flight of the Moabites to the rocky mountains from the sword of their enemies: "O ye that dwell in Moab, leave the cities, and dwell in the rock, and be like the dove that maketh her nest in the sides of the hole's mouth."^q Our Lord addresses the church in the Song of Solomon, in similar terms: "O my dove that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy

^p The swallow had sometimes the honour to be employed in the same service. At one time she was sent home to her nest bedaubed with the colour of victory, to announce the success of a warrior to his distant friends; at another, she returned to the besieged city from whence she had been carried, with a line bound to her foot, on which were as many knots as days were to intervene before he should come to the assistance of the garrison. Pliny's *Natur. Hist.* book x, chap. 34.—The crow was also sent on the same errand. *Ælian de Nat. Animal.* lib. ix, cap. 2.

^q Jer. xlviii, 28.

countenance, let me hear thy voice ; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.”^r The phrase which we render the secret places of the stairs, may, with more propriety be translated, the secret crevices of the precipitous rocks ; for the original term signifies a place so high and steep, that it cannot be approached but by ladders. So closely pursued were the people of Israel, and so unable to resist the assault of their enemies, that, like the timid dove, they fled to the fastnesses of the mountains, and the holes of the rocks. Homer has availed himself of the same circumstance,

Δακρυέσσα δὲ πείτα διαφύγεν ὥς πελεια
 ἥρα θυπ' ἱρηκὸς κοιλὴν εἰσεπτατο πέτρᾱν. *Il. lib. xxi, l. 493.*

“ But then the goddess fled weeping, like a dove which flies in terror from the hawk into a hollow rock.” The miserable remains of the Jews, that survived the destruction of their country by the arms of Nebuchadnezzar, are represented by the prophet as tame doves, violently driven from the valleys which they had been accustomed to haunt, and wandering, lonely and mournful, upon the mountains, the proper abode of the wild pigeon : “ But they that escape, shall escape, and shall be on the mountains like doves of the valleys, all of them mourning, every one for his iniquity.”^s The truth and propriety of these allusions, are confirmed by the writings of several modern travellers. In Asia Minor, according to Chandler, the dove lodges in the holes of the rock ;^t and Dr. Shaw mentions a city in Africa, which derives its name from the great number of wild pigeons which breed in the adjoining cliffs.^u It is not uncommon for shepherds and

^r Song ii, 14.

^t Trav. p. 19.

^s Ezek. vii, 16.

^u Trav. vol. i, p. 180.

fishermen, to seek for shelter in the spacious caverns of that country, from the severity of the weather, and to kindle fires in them, to warm their shivering limbs, and dress their victuals ; in consequence of which, the doves which happen to build their nests on their shelves, must be frequently smutted, and their plumage soiled. Some have conjectured, that the royal Psalmist may allude to this scene, in which he had perhaps acted a part, while he tended his father's flocks, in that singular promise, " Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold."^u The people of Israel, who had long bent their necks to the galling yoke of Egypt, and groaned under the most cruel oppression, may not unfitly be compared to a dove in the fissure of a rock, which had been terrified by the intrusion of strangers, and polluted by the smoke of their fires which ascended to the roof of the cavern, and penetrated into the most remote and secret corner ; or by the smut of the pots, which they had set over these fires for culinary purposes, among which she fluttered in her haste to escape.

The dove issues from the cave of the shepherds, black and dirty, her heart dejected, and her feathers in disorder ; but, having washed herself in the running stream, and trimmed her plumage, she gradually recovers the serenity of her disposition, the purity of her colour, and the elegance of her appearance. So did the people of Israel more than once escape by the favour of Jehovah, from a low and despised condition, and gradually rise to great prosperity and splendor. In Egypt, they laboured in the brick kilns, and in all the services of the field—a

^u Psa. lxxviii, 13.

poor, enslaved and oppressed people ; and after their settlement in the land of promise, they were often reduced to a state of extreme distress ; but in their misery they cried to the Lord, and he heard and delivered them from all their calamities ; he subdued the surrounding nations to their sway ; he poured the accumulated riches of ancient kings into their treasury ; he made them the terror or the admiration of the east. But the holy Psalmist may have a prospective reference to the deliverance which the Gentile nations were to obtain, from the basest and most despicable condition, the worshipping of wood and stone, the gratifying of the vilest lusts, and their advancement to the service of Christ, and the practice of universal holiness and virtue. His words are not less applicable to the deliverance of the church, from the distresses in which she may be at any time involved, and the restoration of individual believers, from a state of spiritual decline. On these joyous occasions, the people of God shake off their fears and their sorrows, and resume their wonted serenity, peace, and joy ; they worship God in the beauty of holiness ; they press forward with renovated vigour to the promised inheritance ; they are as a dove, the most beautiful of the species, whose wings rival the silver in whiteness, and the feathers of whose neck, the yellow radiance of gold.^v

The spreading tree is often her chosen haunt, where she builds her nest, and rears her young. Anacreon's pigeon demands,

Τι γὰρ με δεῖ πεταδαί, &c.

“ For why should I fly to the mountains and over the fields, and perch upon trees, eating any wild thing I can

^v Harmer's Observ. vol. i, p. 176, 177.

find?" Horace records the same fact. In the sixth book of the *Æneid*, Virgil sends the doves, which Venus had dispatched to her son, to roost on the trees:

"Sedibus optatis gemina super arbore sidunt." l. 203.

To this circumstance, the Psalmist seems to allude, in the title of the fifty-sixth Psalm: (על יונת אלם רחוקים), Gnal yonath elem²rehokim; which Selomo applies to David, and renders, Concerning the silent dove of those that are afar off. Bochart has offered the most natural, and in every respect, the best exposition of this obscure title.^w In the opinion of Aben Ezra, it is the first line of a song, after the measure of which, the royal Psalmist composed this sacred ode; but he left it unexplained. This idea Bochart adopts, and proceeds to inquire into the meaning of the words. As they stand in our pointed copies of the Old Testament, no consistent sense can be extracted from them. He, therefore, proposes to change a single point in אלם, by which it may be converted into the plural noun אלם, the hirec for segol. This being done, the sacred song, which furnished the measure of David's composition, will begin thus: The dove of the remote forests. The circumstance, which in the opinion of Bochart has misled interpreters, is the absence of *yod*, the usual sign of the plural. But, as Buxtorf rightly observes, *yod* is often omitted in the plural, as in הנינם dragons, המימם perfect.^x If this trifling emendation be admitted, which the necessity of the case seems to require, the words will mean the dove of distant groves, that is, the wild pigeon which dwells in the deep recesses of the wood, and builds her nest among the thickest branches. Those who apply the words to the Psalmist himself, suppose that they express

^w Hieroz. lib. i, c. 3, p. 18.

^x Deut. xxxii, 33, and Lev. ix, 2.

a wish for the wings of a dove, that he might fly away and be at rest. Driven by the violence of his enemies from the place of his rest in the sanctuary, he was compelled to wander far off, and seek repose in a distant and strange land ; but he neither murmured against God, nor inveighed against his unjust and cruel enemies, the causes of his distress ; he was mild, as he was guiltless before men ; patient, as inoffensive : like the doves in the valley, he was dejected, and mournful ; but he encouraged himself in the Lord, and quietly resigned himself to his sovereign disposal.

The manners of the dove are as engaging, as her form is elegant, and her plumage rich and beautiful. She is the chosen emblem of simplicity, gentleness, chastity, and feminine timidity.^y Our blessed Lord alludes with striking effect to her amiable temper, in that well known direction to his disciples : “ Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.”^z Wisdom without simplicity, degenerates into cunning ; simplicity without wisdom, into silliness : united, the one corrects the excess, or supplies the defects of the other, and both become the objects of praise ; but separated, neither the wisdom of the serpent, nor the simplicity of the dove, obtains in this passage the Saviour’s commendation. The character which is compounded of both, makes the nearest approach to the true standard of Christian excellence. The wisdom of the serpent enables the believer to discern between good and evil, truth and error, that having proved all things, he may hold fast that which is good ; the simplicity of the dove renders him inoffensive and sincere that he may not deceive nor injure his neighbour. Such were the qualities

^y Bochart. Hieroz. lib. i, cap. 4, p. 19, &c. ^z Mat. x, 16.

which the Saviour recommended to his followers; and his apostle wished the Romans to obtain: "I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil."^a

The simplicity of the dove, when separated from the wisdom of the serpent, indicates in Scripture a blameable defect; and in the same light it is viewed by the natural historian. So inattentive is that bird to the snares which the fowler with little precaution spreads for her destruction; so easily is she entangled and taken,—that her simplicity became proverbial among the ancients. Unsuspicious of danger, she approaches the decoy, to gaze upon the new and curious object, and is suddenly taken in the snare; and in a state of captivity she submits to become a decoy in her turn; and with her voice and gestures allures other doves, heedless and foolish as herself, within the grasp of their common enemy. This ignoble character, the prophet imputed to Ephraim, or the ten tribes: He "is like a silly," rather a simple "dove without heart."^b He was so stupid, or so heedless, that he took no precautions against approaching dangers, but threw himself into the power of his enemies.

Her conjugal chastity has been celebrated by every writer, who has described or alluded to her character. She admits but of one mate; she never forsakes him till death put an end to their union; and never abandons of her own accord, the nest which their united labour has provided.^c Ælian, and other ancient writers affirm, that the turtle and the wood pigeon punish adultery with death.^d The

^a Rom. xvi, 19.

^b Hos. vii, 11.

^c Bochart. Hieroz. lib. i, p. 19-20.

^d De Nat. Animal. lib. iii, cap. 44. Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. x, cap. 52.

black pigeon, when her mate dies, obstinately rejects the embraces of another, and continues in a widowed state for life. Hence, among the Egyptians, a black pigeon was the symbol of a widow who declined to enter again into the marriage relation. This fact was so well known, or at least so generally admitted among the ancients, that Tertullian endeavours to establish the doctrine of monogamy by the example of that bird.^e These facts have been transferred by later authors to the widowed turtle; which, deaf to the solicitations of another mate, continues in mournful strains to deplore her loss, till death put a period to her sorrows.^f These facts unfold the true reason, that the church is by Solomon so frequently compared to the dove. Our Lord addresses her in these tender and affecting terms: “O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret shelvings of the inaccessible precipice, let me hear thy voice—let me see thy face; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely. Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled; for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.” And in his description of her holy beauties, we find this clause; “My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her.”^g The image implies, that the church is the only object of the Saviour’s love; and he, on the other hand, the sole delight of her soul. She acknowledges no other Saviour; and he has but one spouse, whom he has betrothed unto himself for ever, in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies.^h

No creature discovers greater timidity than the dove:

^e Bochart. Hieroz. lib. i, cap. 4, p. 23.

^g Song ii, 14; v, 2; vi, 8.

^f Ibid. p. 54.

^h Hos. ii, 19.

on the least noise, she takes the alarm, and flies with the utmost trepidation. Such is the description of the Roman poet :

“ Terretur minimo pennæ stridore columba.”ⁱ

Nor can Valerius Flaccus describe the timidity of a virgin by a more appropriate figure :

“ Ecce ! autem pavidæ virgo de more columbæ,” &c.^j

In the prophecies of Hosea, the haste and trepidation of Israel, are compared to the trembling flight of a dove from the snare of the fowler : “ They shall tremble as a bird out of Egypt, and as a dove out of the land of Assyria ; and I will place them in their houses, saith the Lord.”^k

Doves of every species were presented on the tables of the Jews, and offered, by the law of Moses, at the altar of Jehovah. These sacrificial oblations were of various kinds ; the grateful Israelite was permitted to bring a pair of turtle doves or young pigeons, as a free will offering to the Lord ; but when he had neglected to reprove his brother, who had in his presence blasphemed the name of God ; or had himself taken a rash oath, or had polluted himself by touching some unclean thing,—he was commanded to bring as a trespass offering two turtle doves, or two young pigeons, the one for a sin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering. The same kind of oblations were required in a variety of other cases, which are marked with sufficient clearness and precision.^l In these sacrifices, Jehovah preferred the turtle dove and the pigeon, to all other birds, on account of their purity, chastity, simplicity, and other amiable dispositions which they discovered. The law of Moses required only young pigeons

ⁱ Ovid. Trist. lib. i, eleg. 1.

^j Quoted by Bochart, lib. i, p. 24.

^k Hosea xi, 11.

^l Lev. xii, 6 ; xiv, 22 ; xv, 13, &c.

to be offered in sacrifice, for the oblations of God were to be of the best ; and these creatures become tough and unsavoury when they grow old ; but the full grown turtle continues tender and good. But they were to be offered in sacrifice only by those persons that had nothing more valuable to give ; for the law runs in these terms : “ And if he be not able to bring a lamb, then he shall bring for his trespass which he hath committed, two turtle doves, or two young pigeons, unto the Lord.”^m It was therefore the poverty of the virgin mother of our Lord, which compelled her, when the days of her purification were accomplished, to offer in sacrifice a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons ; and it was a striking proof of the amazing condescension of Christ, that he submitted to be born of a woman, who had nothing more valuable to present on the altar of his Father, even for the gift of the promised Messiah. Such humble offerings were in use, long before the ceremonial law was given from Sinai ; for, when Abraham was received into covenant with God, he offered in sacrifice by the divine command, a turtle dove and a young pigeon. These, together with the heifer, the she-goat, and the ram, all of three years old, which he immolated at the same time, comprehended the different kinds of sacrifices which were afterwards appointed in the wilderness. And they were perhaps required on this occasion, to furnish the patriarch with a complete view of those sacrificial oblations, by which the faith of old testament Christians was, in every age of that shadowy dispensation, to be conducted to the atoning blood of Messiah.

The dove was selected by Jehovah, to be the messen-

^m Lev. v, 7.

ger of peace to Noah and his family. Bochartⁿ is of opinion, that the patriarch made choice of her, after the raven had disappointed his hopes, to bring him intelligence how far the waters of the deluge had subsided, on account of the docility and kindness of her disposition; because she is able to continue long on the wing, and visit places very remote; and because, how wide soever the range of her flight, she is naturally disposed to return to her nest, or the place of her abode. But it is more probable, that he was directed to the choice of this amiable and beautiful bird, by the secret influence of Jehovah, who had appointed her the herald of peace and restoration to a ruined world. The first time she was sent out, she returned after a short excursion; because the waters still covered the face of the earth, and she could find no rest for the sole of her foot. She returned the second time, after pursuing her flight to a much greater distance, for she did not come back till the evening, when she returned with an olive leaf in her mouth, which Noah justly considered as a sure proof that the waters had subsided. The tops of the highest mountains were seen before he sent out the raven; but now, the hills, on the declivities of which the olive loves to grow, began to rise above the waters, and indicate to the imprisoned patriarch and his numerous charge, that the face of the ground would ere long be dry, and in a condition to be re-occupied; while the olive leaf instructed him, that the fruit-bearing trees were not all destroyed, and food might still be found for himself and his family. She continued her excursion till the evening, that he might know she had now found rest for the sole of her foot on the trees of the

ⁿ Hieroz. lib. i, cap. 5, p. 27, 28.

wood; but when her services were needed no longer, she yielded to the suggestion of instinct, and waited in the forest, the liberation of her mate. This last circumstance was intended to satisfy Noah, that the earth was now ready to receive him and his family, and all the creatures that he had with him in the ark. In these incidents, we can easily discover a wisdom and prudence, far superior to the inspiration of instinct; we discern the finger of God, regulating all the motions of this animal in favour of Noah, and the hopes of a reviving world.

It is extremely probable, she found the olive leaf, the symbol of peace, on the declivities of Ararat, and did not need, as Bochart supposes, to visit the distant hills of Assyria; for in succeeding ages, geographers assure us, the lower regions of that lofty chain were adorned with numerous groves of olive trees, many of which might have existed at the time of the deluge.

Some have asked how the olive could remain so long verdant under the waters; but the answer is easy: the sacred writer only states the return of the dove with the olive leaf in her mouth, but says nothing of its freshness and verdure. It is however asserted by the ancients, that the olive is one of those trees, which not only lives, but even flourishes under the water, and never sheds its leaves.ⁿ Hence, that line of the poet:

— “*ramum semper frondentis olivæ.*”

The leaf is so very strong and durable, and particularly resists so long the action of water, that it was in ancient times often employed by the orientals, to cover the roofs of their habitations. A leaf of this texture must have been easily found adhering to its parent tree, in spite of the stormy tempest and the raging billow.

ⁿ Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. xiii, cap. 25. Strabo, lib. xvi. Diodor. lib. iii.

The dove is also supposed by some writers, to be the proper emblem of the Holy Spirit, when he descended upon the Saviour at his baptism. In the gospel according to Luke, the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape, like a dove upon him. As the dove brought intelligence to Noah of approaching deliverance ; so did the Holy Spirit, at the baptism of Christ, announce the spiritual restoration of perishing sinners, by the obedience and death of the Redeemer. For this reason, many have supposed, that the third person of trinity on that occasion, assumed the real figure of a dove ; but the sacred writer seems to refer, not to the shape, but to the manner in which the dove descends from the sky. Had it related to the shape or form, it would not have been *ὡς περὶ περισσεῖαν*, as a dove ; but *ὡς περὶ περισσεῖαν*, as of a dove. In this manner, the likeness of fire is expressed by the same evangelist, in the Acts of the apostles : “ There appeared cloven tongues (*ὡς πυρός*) as of fire.” The meaning of the clause therefore is, that as a dove hovers on the wing, and overshadows the place upon which she intends to perch, so did the Holy Spirit, in the form of a luminous cloud, like the Schechinah which rested on the tabernacle, gradually descend, hovering, and overshadowing the Saviour as he came up from the water. This exposition refutes another opinion, which was entertained by many of the ancients, that it was a real dove which alighted upon the head of our Lord ; for if the sacred writer describes only the manner of descending, neither the form nor the real presence of a dove can be admitted. But although the evangelist alludes only to the manner in which that bird descends from the wing, he clearly recognizes her as the chosen emblem of the Holy Spirit, the messenger of peace and joy to sinful and miser-

able men. He descends from the Father, “to lead his people unto all truth,” to “teach them all things” necessary to their salvation, “to help their infirmities, and make intercession for them, with groanings which cannot be uttered.”^p It may be truly said of him, that he is without gall; for “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.”^q These precious dispositions, the Spirit of God infuses into the hearts of all genuine believers, although they exist in a much higher degree, and shine with a far superior lustre, in the spotless humanity of Christ. The Father anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows; “he is fairer than the children of men;” “he is altogether lovely.”

The Turtle.

The form and manners of this bird, so nearly resemble those of a pigeon, that a particular account of her is unnecessary. They are only different species of the same family, and exhibit the same general character, although they differ in some important particulars, to which the sacred writers occasionally refer. The voice of the turtle is hoarse and plaintive, and heard so frequently in the grove, that it has brought upon her the reproach of troublesome loquacity.”^r Still it is pleasing to the ear of the husbandman and the musing wanderer, because it announces the arrival of spring, a season so dear to every creature possessed of life and sensibility. The following allusion to the plaintive harbinger of the reviving year, is exquisitely beautiful: “Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away; for, lo! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of

^p John xvi, 13. Rom. viii, 26. ^q Gal. v, 22.

^r Bochart. Hieroz. lib. i, p. 54. Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. xii, c. 10.

birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.”^s By the turtle in this invitation, the Hebrew writers understand the Holy Spirit; and the Chaldee paraphrast thus interprets the words: Ye have now heard the voice of the Holy Spirit, that is, the deliverance which I promised to your father Abraham. In a succeeding age, the prophet Jeremiah alludes to the annual migration of this bird: “The turtle, the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord.”^t She differs in this respect from the rest of her family, which are all stationary. The fact to which the prophet alludes, is attested by Aristotle, in these words: “The pigeon and the dove are always present, but the turtle only in summer; for she is not seen in the winter;”^u and in another part of his work, he asserts, that the dove remains, while the turtle migrates. The statement of the Grecian sage, is supported by Varro and other ancient writers of Greece and Rome;^v but Pliny and others are of opinion, that the turtle rather conceals herself during the winter, than departs in search of a milder clime;^w and Aristotle himself, does not refuse that some turtles may remain behind in the warmer parts of Greece. But the concealment of the turtle during the winter, is not supported by any proof; it is therefore a gratuitous supposition, which cannot invalidate the authority of the prophet, nor the decided testimony of so many writers of antiquity, confirmed by the most eminent natural historians of modern times.^x

It has already been observed, that the turtle dove never admits a second mate, but lingers out her life in sorrowful

^s Song ii, 11, 12.

^t Jer. viii, 7.

^u Hist. lib. viii, c. 3.

^v Varro de Re Rust. lib. iii, cap. 5, et Cicero de Finibus.

^w Nat. Hist. lib. x, c. 24.

^x Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. i, p. 488.

widowhood. To this remarkable circumstance, these words of David are by many thought to refer: "O deliver not the soul of thy turtle dove unto the multitude of the wicked; forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever."^y As the turtle cleaves to her mate with unshaken fidelity, so these interpreters say, had Israel adhered to their God. But it is well known that God's ancient people were a stiff-necked and rebellious race, equally fickle and perfidious, and discovering on almost every occasion a most violent and unreasonable inclination to the worship of heathen deities. It is, therefore, more natural to suppose, that the holy Psalmist, by this term, alludes to the weak and helpless state of his people, that like the turtle had neither power nor inclination to resist their numerous enemies. The dove is a harmless and simple creature, equally destitute of skill and courage for the combat; and the turtle is the smallest of the family. She is therefore a most proper emblem of the national imbecility into which the people of Israel had sunk, in consequence of their numerous iniquities, with which they had long provoked the God of their fathers. They who were the terror of surrounding nations, while they feared the Lord and kept his commandments, whom God himself instructed in the art of war, and led to certain victory, had by their folly, become the scorn of their neighbours, and an easy prey to every invader.

The Swallow.

This bird is more than once joined with the turtle, in the holy Scriptures; and may, therefore, be properly introduced in this place: but, except in the circumstance of annual migration, she is exceedingly different in disposi-

^y Psa. lxxiv, 19.

tions and manners. The illustration of Scripture has no concern with her form or colour, nor with the varieties of her species ; these particulars, therefore, the plan of this work requires to be omitted. While the turtle retires to the tall trees of the forest, or the lonely summits of the mountains, the swallow, like the domestic dove, courts the presence of mankind, and builds her nest in their dwellings.^y To this trait of her character, the Psalmist alludes with great beauty and tenderness, in the sacred ode which he composed, as is generally thought, when he fled before his unnatural son Absalom : “ Yea, the swallow hath found a nest for herself, where she may lay her young ; thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my king and my God.”^z The sparrow and the swallow seem to have been permitted to construct their nests in the houses near the altar of Jehovah ; perhaps in the cloisters of the sanctuary, or in the buildings connected with that sacred edifice ; for it cannot be reasonably supposed, that they would be permitted to nestle about the altar itself, which was consecrated by a special ceremony to the service of Jehovah, and before which, the priests were continually serving. Driven from his home, and especially from the national altars, where all his delights were habitually placed, he envied these birds their enjoyments in the purlieus of the tabernacle. There they found for themselves a place of rest, and reared their young without interruption ; while he was compelled to wander far from the place of his repose, upon the mountains of Israel. More destitute than the birds of the air, he, who lately swayed the sceptre over a

^y Bochart. Hieroz. lib. i, p. 59. Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. x, cap. 34. Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. i, cap. 52. Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. vi, p. 466.

^z Psa. lxxxiv, 3.

numerous and affectionate people, had “not where to lay his head.” But the afflicted monarch did not resign himself to fretfulness or despair; he encouraged himself in the Lord, and patiently waited for the return of happier days.

The note of the swallow is quick and frequent, and seems to have something in it querulous and mournful. Many a classic bard has celebrated her “shrill and mournful song;” her bitter lamentations from the embowering thicket, or the top of lonely mountains.^a Thus Horace commemorates her woes:

“Nidum ponit Ityn flebiliter gemens
Infelix avis.” Lib. iv, Ode 12.

In this manner did Hezekiah complain under the mortal disease from which he was delivered by the immediate interposition of Jehovah: Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove; mine eyes fail with looking upwards: O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me.”^b

The annual migration of the swallow has been familiarly known in every age, and perhaps in every region of the earth. Anacreon, in his thirty-third ode, addresses her in these words:

Σὺ μὲν, φίλη χελιδὼν
Ετησίη μολῶσα, &c.

“Friendly swallow, thou indeed coming annually, buildest thy nest in the summer, but in winter disappearest.” And Aristotle remarks in the sober language of history: “Both the swallow and the turtle leave us, to spend the winter in other climes.”^c The swallow, says Ælian, announces the most delightful season of the year; she re-

^a See Bochart. Hieroz. lib. i, p. 60.

^b Isa. xxxviii, 14.

^c i, 457, g.

mains in the northern latitude six months, the thrush and the turtle only three.^d But in Ethiopia, and other warm countries, according to Herodotus, she continues the whole year.^e Bochart admits it as a certain fact, that in some of the milder climates of Europe, the swallow ventures to remain during the winter ; but loses her feathers, and sinks into a torpid state, in which she continues, till awakened by the genial influences of spring. But, when the prophet says, “ the swallow knoweth the time of her coming,” it is not necessary to understand it of all these birds without exception : it is sufficient if his assertion is verified by the migration of the species in general ; and we are admonished by their example, of approaching winter, or opening spring.

The Crane.

The crane, in her character and mode of life, nearly resembles the stork. Like her, she is a bird of passage, and in the language of ancient prophecy, knows her appointed times. From her eager desire to avoid the effects of winter, to which she seems to be extremely sensible, she is supposed to retire to the remotest countries of the globe ; or as it is expressed by Aristotle, from the coasts of Scythia to the sources of the Nile. Homer had long before entertained the same idea, which he thus expresses :

Κλαῖγῃ ταιγὲ πειτονταὶ ἐπ’ Ωκεανοῖο ῥοαῶν. *Iliad*, lib. iii, l. 5.

“ These fly to the streams of the ocean ;” that is, to the regions of the south, where the ancient poets placed the dwellings of the Pygmies. Hence the demand of Lucullus, addressed to Pompey, “ Do I seem to you less wise

^d Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. i, cap. 52. See also Buffon’s Nat. Hist. vol. vi, p. 469.

^e Lib. ii, cap. 22.

^f Hist. Anim. lib. viii, cap. 12.

than the cranes and the storks, that I should not change my habitation with the seasons of the year?" The ancients believed, that the native country of the crane is Thrace. Virgil places her about the river Strymon, which rolls its waters through that country.^g Ælian states, that when the cranes are about to bid farewell to the fields and colds of Thrace, they assemble on the banks of the Hebrus, from whence they commence their journey to the Nile.^h But those which emigrate from the regions of Scythia, Virgil conducts across the country of Pontus.

——— "ubi frigidus annus

Trans Pontum fugat et terris immittit apricis."

They leave the wilds of Scythia about the middle of autumn, and return in the ensuing spring and summer. Of all the migratory birds, says Buffon,ⁱ the crane undertakes and performs the boldest and most distant journeys. These birds, by the testimony of both ancient and modern writers, discover very great sagacity, both in arranging their bands, and in conducting their long and fatiguing march;^j but as the sacred writer directs our attention only to their sagacity in discerning the time appointed for their departure and return, the curious and interesting particulars mentioned by those authors, do not belong to the plan of this work.

These statements completely justify the prophet, in proposing the emigration of the crane as an example of natural wisdom and sagacity: "Yea, the stork in the heavens knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle, and

^g Æneid. lib. vi, l. 312.

^h De Nat. Animal. lib. iii, cap. 13.

ⁱ Nat. Hist. vol. vii, p. 277.

^j Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. x, cap. 30. Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. iii, cap. 14. Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. vii, p. 281.

the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord." That nation whom God had chosen for his own peculiar inheritance, discovered less wisdom and prudence in the management of their affairs, than these irrational tribes. They soon forgot the mighty works which the Most High had wrought in their favour; they abandoned his service; they refused to listen to his warning voice; they resolutely turned aside to the worship of strange gods, and bowed down to a stock or a stone, till Jehovah, justly provoked by their enormities, delivered them into the hand of their enemies, and scattered them over the face of all the earth.

No bird is more noisy than the crane; and none utters a harsher note. Homer compares the Trojans on their march to a troop of cranes, pursuing, with loud and discordant clamours, their annual journey.

Τροίης μιν κλαγγὴ τεινομένη τίσαν ὄρνιθες ὥς
'Ην τε περ κλαγγὴ γερανῶν πέλαι θράνοβι προ. Lib. iii, l. 2.

Which Virgil imitates in these lines:

— "quales sub nubibus atris
Strymoniae dant signa grues, atque æthera tranunt
Cum sonitu, fugiuntque Notos clamore secundo."
Æneid. lib. x, l. 264.

The prophet, however, applies the verb (צפף) tsaphaph, which signifies to chatter, to the loud and screaming cry of this bird; for which Mr. Harmer professes himself unable to account. "The word tsaphtsaph," says he "translated chatter, appears to signify the low, melancholy, interrupted voice of the complaining sick, rather than a chattering noise, if we consult the other places in which it is used: as for the chattering of the crane, it seems quite inexplicable." But the difficulty had not, perhaps,

appeared so great, if this respectable writer had observed that the connective *vau* is wanting in the original text, which may be thus rendered: "As a crane, a swallow, so did I chatter." The two nouns are not, therefore, necessarily connected with the verb *tsaphtsaph*, but admit the insertion of another verb suitable to the nature of the first nominative. The ellipsis may be supplied in this manner: "As a crane, so did I scream, as a swallow, so did I chatter." Such a supplement is not, in this instance, forced and unnatural; for it is evidently the design of Hezekiah to say, that he expressed his grief after the manner of these two birds, and therefore suitably to each; and he uses the verb *tsaphtsaph*, which properly corresponds only with the last noun, to indicate this design, leaving the reader to supply the verb which corresponds with the other. It is also perfectly agreeable to the manners of the east, where sorrow is expressed sometimes in a low interrupted voice, and anon in loud continued exclamations. The afflicted monarch, therefore, expressed his extreme grief after the manner of the orientals, in loud screams like the crane, or in low interrupted murmurings like the swallow. According to some writers, the verb under consideration signifies the note of any bird, and by consequence may with equal propriety be employed to denote the loud scream of the crane, or the melancholy twitter of the swallow; if this be so, the difficulty admits of an easy solution.

It only remains to be observed, that the crane, although in several points resembling the stork, which the Jewish lawgiver has pronounced an unclean bird, is classed among the clean animals which his people were permitted to eat. The reason is, the crane does not, like the stork, live on

impure or venomous creatures, but on fruits and seeds.^j It was the design of Jehovah, by those prohibitory laws concerning meats, to prevent his people from tasting impure or unwholesome food; and thus at once to secure, as far as the choice of food can do so, their bodily health and comfort; and suggest the moral and evangelical purity, to which, as a holy nation, they were bound to aspire. In subserviency to these great and benevolent purposes, the crane, which is a granivorous bird, was placed in the list of clean animals, which they might eat without injury to themselves, or offence to their divine sovereign.

The Partridge.

We find only two allusions to this bird in the holy Scriptures. The first occurs in the history of David, where he expostulates with Saul concerning his unjust and foolish pursuit: "The king of Israel is come out to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge on the mountains."^k The other in the prophecies of Jeremiah: "As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool."^l

The Hebrew name for the partridge is (קורא) kore, from the verb kara to cry, a name suggested by the harsh note of that bird. Bochart indeed refuses that kore signifies the partridge; he thinks the wood-cock is intended, because the kore of which David speaks in the first quotation, is a mountain bird.^m But that excellent writer

^j Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. ii, cap. 1. Σπειρονίας δε τας Λιγυπτιους καλαλαμβανουσι, και τραπιζαν, ως αν ει ποις, αφθονον την εν ταις αρεραις ενροντες. See also Bochart. Hieroz. lib. i, p. 68.

^k 1 Sam. xxvi, 20. ^l Jer. xvii, 11. ^m Hieroz. lib. i, c. 12, p. 80.

did not recollect that a species of partridge actually inhabits the mountains,ⁿ and by consequence his argument is of no force. Nor is the opinion of others more tenable, that the kore hatches the eggs of a stranger, because Jeremiah observes, “she sitteth on eggs and hatcheth them not;” for the passage only means, that the partridge often fails in her attempts to bring forth her young. To such disappointments she is greatly exposed from the position of her nest in the ground, where her eggs are often spoiled by wet, or crushed by the foot.

The manner in which the Arabs hunt the partridge and other birds, affords an excellent comment on the complaint of David to his cruel and unrelenting sovereign; for observing that they become languid and fatigued after they have been hastily put up two or three times, they immediately run in upon them and knock them down with their bludgeons.^o It was precisely in this manner that Saul hunted David; he came suddenly upon him, and from time to time drove him from his hiding places, hoping at last to render him weary of life, and find an opportunity of effecting his destruction.

When the prophet says the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not, the male seems to be understood: because both the verbs are masculine, and the verb *yalad* in the masculine gender cannot signify to lay eggs. The red partridges of France, says Buffon, appear to differ from the red partridges of Egypt; because the Egyptian priests chose for the emblem of a well regulated family, two partridges, the one male, the other female, sitting or brooding together.^p And by the text in Jere-

ⁿ Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. ii, p. 368.

^o Shaw's Trav. vol. i, p. 425.

^p Nat. Hist. vol. ii, p. 361.

miah, it seems that in Judea the male partridge sat as well as the female. But while the incubation of other birds, which are by no means so attentive, is generally crowned with success, the hopes of the partridge are frequently disappointed by circumstances already noticed, which she can neither foresee nor prevent.

CHAP. XII.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

The Quail.—The Cock.—The Peacock.—The Sparrow.

The Quail.

THIS bird is somewhat less than a pigeon, and larger than a sparrow. Its Hebrew name is (שלר) shelav, which Bochart traces to (שלה) shalah, which signifies to live peaceably, or to abound, because in warm countries no bird is more abundant. From its remarkable obesity, it has obtained from the Arabs the name of sumana, which is not less characteristic than the other. But it is more probable that the Hebrew name alludes to the foolish and ruinous security in which the quail is known to indulge. When she lights upon a field abounding in grain, she resigns herself to the power of appetite without fear or suspicion. Devoted entirely to the happiness of the moment, she betrays herself with her incessant singing, and is easily enticed into the snare of the fowler.^a Josephus renders the term by the Greek word *οστρυζ*, and the Septuagint

^a Bochart. Hieroz. lib. i, p. 96.

by *ορτυγομητρα*, which, in the opinion of some writers, denote birds of a different species. This is the sentiment of Augustine, although he admits that the difference between these birds and the quail is very inconsiderable. They appear from the description of different authors, to be only varieties of the same species, of which the *ortygometra* is represented as in every respect entitled to the preference. She is the mother of the family, of a larger size, and according to Pliny, the hereditary leader in their migrating journies.^b These terms are, therefore, often used promiscuously to denote the quail.

In opposition to this opinion, Ludolf, an author of great celebrity, contends, that the sacred historian alludes to the locust. For if the Hebrew word is derived from a verb which signifies to abound, it applies to the locust with still more propriety than the quail; he adds, that all the oriental versions, and the Arabic authors, have retained the Hebrew word without understanding it, and that Josephus is the first who gave it the common signification, without producing any reason for his interpretation.

His arguments, it is readily granted, possess no inconsiderable force; and in the opinion of Saurin, they invalidate, or at least involve the common interpretation in doubt and suspicion. But it may be replied in general, to the reasonings of Ludolf, that the term *שׁליו*, no where else in the sacred volume, signifies the locust; and therefore ought not, without more powerful reasons than he has been able to produce, to be so rendered in this passage. Nor will the root from which it proceeds admit of his conjecture; for no creature is more restless than the locust. Besides

^b Nat. Hist. lib. x, cap. 33.

the animal which in one passage is called (שׁלִי) shelav, is (עוף) ouph in another; but it deserves to be remarked, that the latter term properly belongs to the fowls of heaven, not to winged insects; and if at any time it seems to be used in relation to these, it is only as a generic term, and in a very loose and indefinite sense. But when Moses says, Noah builded an altar unto the Lord, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean (עוף) fowl, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar, birds only can be understood; for winged insects were never offered in sacrifice upon the altar of Jehovah. Hence when שׁלִי is used distinctly, and not in the universality of the genus, it ought to be understood of a bird, and not of an insect. In this sense it was understood by all the ancients, although they differed about the species of bird which the sacred writer intended. On the hypothesis of Ludolf, it may be considered as an inexplicable circumstance that Moses, in a country swarming with locusts, did not seem to think of them, when he asked with surprise: “The people among whom I am, are six hundred thousand footmen; and thou hast said, I will give them flesh, that they may eat a whole month. Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them to suffice them? or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them to suffice them?”^c Moses knew that the innumerable swarms of locusts which devour the land of Egypt and the surrounding countries, were the sport of every wind, and that a steady gale could waft as many into the desert, as would suffice all the thousands of Israel. Why then did he not mention the locusts, and present his supplication for a favourable breeze? This circumstance cannot be accounted for, but on the supposition that locusts

^c Numb. xi, 20, 21.

were not the object of their desire, nor in the contemplation of Jehovah. The rebellious Israelites demanded flesh to eat in the clearest terms, and in their name, Moses asked flesh from the Lord. It is true the word flesh is not always used in a restricted sense; for on that occasion Moses asked, "Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them, to suffice them? Or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them to suffice them?" But in this place, it is not used in its most general sense, for the muscular parts of any animal, because the people under this name demanded the same kinds of flesh to which they had been accustomed in Egypt. Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely.^d The animals on whose flesh they feasted in Egypt, are enumerated by Moses, in his reply to the intimation of Jehovah, except one species, which David, in spirit, long afterwards mentioned in one of the songs of Zion. "He rained flesh also upon them as dust, and feathered fowls," (עוף כנף) ouph canaph, fowls of the wing, by way of excellence, to distinguish them from (שרץ העוף) sherets haoph, winged insects.^e It does not appear, that insects are ever in Scripture called ouph canaph; this phrase being appropriated to the fowls of heaven. Ouph is a generic term, which embraces every winged animal; but when the Hebrews mean to distinguish winged insects; they connect with it the term sherets; and canaph, when they wish to designate feathered fowls. Canaph properly signifies a wing, which may be contracted or expanded, for the purpose of covering and protecting the body of the animal; which does not seem to accord with the wings of insect tribes. Nor were the quails in danger of breed-

^d Numb. xi, 4, 5.^e Lev. xi, 13, 20. Deut. xiv, 19, &c.

ing worms, and becoming unfit for use, by exposure to the scorching beams of the sun on the sandy desert, for this effect was prevented by the rapidity of the exsiccation; and the safety of this method of curing them, is confirmed by the practice of the modern Egyptians, who dry their meat, and preserve it for use in the same manner.^f Whatever then, may be the proper meaning of (שלו), shelav, it is far more probable, that it denotes a feathered fowl, than a locust.

It is evident from the history of Moses, that the demands of Israel were twice supplied with quails by the miraculous interposition of divine providence. The first instance is recorded in the book of Exodus, and is described in these words; “I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God. And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp.”^g From these words it appears, that the quails were sent to supply the wants of the people, at the same time when manna began to be showered down from heaven, around their encampment in the desert of Sin; and it is clear, from the beginning of the chapter, that this event took place soon after their departure from Egypt, upon the fifteenth day of the second month, before they came to mount Sinai. This miracle was repeated at Kibroth-hattaavah, a place three days journey beyond the desert of Sinai; but they struck their tents before Sinai, in the second year after their departure from Egypt, on the twentieth day of the second month; so that a whole year intervened between the first and second

^f Maillet, Let. xi, p. 110.

^g Exod. xvi, 12, 13.

supply. In the first instance, the quails were scattered about the camp only for one day; but in the second, they came up from the sea for a whole month. They only covered the camp at their first appearance; but when they came the second time, they lay round about it to the distance of a day's journey. No signs of divine wrath attended the first miracle; but the second was no sooner wrought, than the vengeance of their offended God overtook these incorrigible sinners: "While the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people; and the Lord smote the people with a very great plague." Hence it is evident, that the sacred historian records two different events; of which, the one was more stupendous than the other, and seemed to Moses so extraordinary, that on receiving the divine promise, he could not refrain from objecting: "The people, among whom I am, are six hundred thousand footmen; and thou hast said, I will give them flesh, that they may eat a whole month. Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them to suffice them? Or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them to suffice them?" Moses had seen the power of Jehovah successfully exerted in feeding his people with flesh for one day; but he could scarcely imagine, from whence supplies of the same kind could be drawn for a whole month. That eminent servant of Jehovah, astonished at the greatness of the promised favour, seemed to forget for a moment, that with God all things are possible.^h

These quails were brought by an immediate display of almighty power into the desert, and scattered around the camp of Israel. "And there went forth a wind from the

^h Harmer's Observ. vol. iv, p. 367.

Lord, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, as it were a day's journey on this side, and as it were a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp."ⁱ The sacred historian does not mean, as some writers have absurdly imagined, that they were produced in the sea, nor even that they were hatched on the shore, or had remained for some time in the neighbourhood; but only, that they had crossed the sea in their way to the desert.^k It is generally agreed, that these birds, like the turtle, the crane, and the swallow, annually migrate to distant countries; and that they were on their journey from Egypt, when the "wind from the Lord," forcing them to change their course, wafted them over the Red sea, to the camp of Israel. This appears to be the reason that Moses observes, the wind brought quails from the sea; and Diodorus, describing the manner in which the people about Rhinoculura catch these birds, uses the very words of the inspired writer: They place long nets made of split reeds along the shore for many stadia, in which they catch the quails, which are brought in immense numbers from the sea, (*ἐκ τῆς πελάγους*) and lay them up for their future subsistence.^l

The agent employed by Jehovah, was a mighty wind; not an incorporeal spirit, whose ministry he condescends occasionally to employ in the movements of providence; but a gale of wind, which the sacred writer says, went forth from the Lord, to intimate, not only its supernatural origin, and special determination, which were sufficiently conspicuous by the effect itself, but also its irre-

ⁱ Num. xi, 31.

^j Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. x, cap. 29. Joseph. Antiq. b. iii, ch. 1.

^k Diodor. lib. i, p. 38.

sistible force, which collected from every quarter, the innumerable flocks of these birds that darken the air of the surrounding regions at certain seasons of the year, and swept them into the desert, to supply the wants of Israel.

The Jewish lawgiver only mentions in general terms, that a wind went forth from the Lord, and brought quails from the sea; but the holy Psalmist is more particular, stating in these words, the points from which it came: "He caused an east wind to blow in the heaven; and by his power he brought in the south wind."¹ On this passage it has been asked, How can these winds blow together, and at the same time bring up the quails from the sea into the desert? The Seventy interpreters, and the Vulgate, found it so difficult to give a satisfactory answer to these queries, that they were induced to render the first clause, "He removed the east wind from the heaven;" as if the removal of one wind was necessarily succeeded by another. But this version cannot be admitted, because the Psalmist clearly intends to represent the east and the south winds, as the joint instruments of divine goodness, which by their united force, collected and brought up the quails from the sea. If the Psalmist had meant to express the removing of the east wind, he must have used the phrase (מן השמים) from the heaven; but instead of this, he uses the words (בשמים) in or into the heavens, which conveys an idea quite the reverse. Our version, therefore, gives the true sense of the sacred text: He caused an east wind to blow in the heaven; that is, he introduced it for the very purpose of bringing the quails into the camp. Nor can the sacred writer be justly charged with inconsistency, in combining the force of the east and the south wind, on

¹ Psa. lxxviii, 26.

that memorable occasion ; for, it is evident from the classic authors, that they are not contrary, but may conspire to produce the same effect. Thus :

“ Una Eurusque Notusque ruunt, creberque procellis
Africas, et vastos volvunt ad littora fluctus.” *Æn.* lib. i, l. 35.

In the lines of Homer, the same winds contend with each other to shake the trees of the mountain forest, and shiver to pieces their long extended boughs :

Ως δ' Ευρος τε Νοτος τ' εριδαινετον αλληλοϊν
Ουρεος εν βησσοσ βαθεν πελεμιζεμεν ύλην. *Il.* lib. xvi, l. 765.

To this may be added, that in the whole of this Psalm, as often in the other poetical books of the Hebrews, the two hemistichs are almost parallel, and mutually explain each other. From whence it follows, that (עס) *yasah* in this text, has nearly the same meaning as its parallel verb (ויהג) *vainhag*, which signifies to introduce. This is accordingly the sense which all interpreters, ancient and modern, have adopted, except the Septuagint and the Vulgate. From this statement it appears, that the royal Psalmist in this passage means to excite, not to remove the east wind ; to introduce, not to expel it from the heavens. But to understand the matter clearly, let it be remembered, that the people of Israel were at that time in the wilderness of Paran ; at the distance of three days journey from Sinai, directly north from the extremity of the Arabian gulf ; and by consequence, from Theman, the country from whence the south winds blows, whose name it commonly bears, in the Hebrew text, which brought the quails into the camp of Israel. The same region is named (קדי) *kadim*, that is, the east ; because it lay toward the south-east ; and was denominated sometimes by the one name, and sometimes by the other. Although the

cardinal winds are reckoned four in number, which are again subdivided into many more; yet the ancient philosophers, and particularly Aristotle and Theophrastus, distributed them into two, the north and the south.^a The westerly winds they included in the north, because they are colder; and the easterly winds in the south, because they are attended by a greater degree of heat. But, since the east wind was anciently comprehended in the south, the east and the south may be used in this text as synonymous; and by consequence, the east is the same, or nearly the same, as the south wind. Nor is it in this text alone, that the sacred writers ascribe to the east, what might seem to be the proper effects of the south wind; the same thing may be observed in every part of Scripture. It burns up the fruits of the earth;—it blasts the vines, and other fruit bearing trees;—it drove back the Red sea, and opened a passage to the people of God;—it dries up the fountains of water;—and by its irresistible violence, it dashes the ships of Tarshish in pieces; and in fine, scatters destruction among the dwellings of wicked men, and sweeps them from the face of the earth, into the silent mansions of the grave.^r The prophet Isaiah, on this account calls it a rough wind;^s and Jonah feelingly describes the vehemence with which it beat upon his head till he fainted, and wished in himself to die.^t The Greek interpreters uniformly render it the south wind; and Theodoret regards these two winds as nearly the same.^u Although, therefore, the phrase (רוּחַ הַקָּדִים) *ruah hakadim*, pro-

^a Meteorol. lib. ii, cap. 6.

^r Gen. xli, 6. Ezek. xvii, 10, and xix, 12. Exod. xiv, 21. Hos. xiii, 15. Psa. xlviii, 8. Job xxvii, 21. Jer. xviii, 17.

^s Isa. xxvii, 8.

^t Jon. xiv, 8.

^u Quoted by Bochart. Hieroz. lib. i, cap. 15, p. 103.

perly and precisely speaking, denotes the east wind ; yet, because the east and the south winds resemble each other in many particulars, the Hebrews, in the opinion of Bochart and other learned writers, appear to have used these names promiscuously ; which is the reason that (קדים) kadim is in every part of the Greek version, and particularly in the text under review, rendered the south wind. Thus the same wind seems to have been intended by both these terms, the south or African wind, which from the interior of Egypt, wafted the quails into the desert, and scattered them round the tents of Israel.

This difficulty admits of other solutions equally natural and easy. The inspired writer may be understood to mean the south-east wind, which might bring the quails as well from the east as from the south ; or, that both the east and the south winds were employed on that occasion, the first to scatter about the tents of Israel, the congregated flocks, which the last had swept into the desert ; or, in order to secure a complete supply for so great a multitude, to gather at the same time from the east and the south, the widely dispersed troops of these birds, which, in distant regions of the sky, were pursuing their annual journey from their winter quarters, to the more temperate latitudes.

It is indeed objected by some writers, that the west wind, rather than the east, ought to blow, in order to produce the effect recorded by Moses ; and that, according to Pliny and Aristotle, the quails do not trust themselves to the sky when the humid and boisterous south wind blows ; and for this reason, the winds blowing from the north and west, are distinguished by the name of ornithian, because they are favourable to the migratory tribes.*

* Aristotel. Hist. lib. viii, cap. 12. Plin. Hist. Natur. lib. x, c. 23.

But no miracle is involved in this circumstance ; for these ancient authors only mean, that the quails pursue their journey with greater difficulty, and are more easily taken when the south wind blows ; while, according to the observation of others, these birds of passage were brought back in the spring, by the south winds, which are the most proper for conducting them from the banks of the Nile and the shores of the Red sea, into the wilderness of Paran.

The quails were scattered around the camp of Israel, in the most astonishing numbers : “ He rained flesh also upon them as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea.”^w The holy Psalmist had used the metaphorical word to rain, in relation to the manna, in a preceding verse, both to intimate its descent from heaven, and its prodigious abundance. And because a single metaphor is not sufficient to give us a just idea of the sudden and extraordinary supplies which descended on the tents of Israel, they are compared to the dust of the field, and to the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered. To suggest at once the countless myriads of these birds, and the ease with which they are caught, it is added : “ He let it fall in the midst of their camp round about their habitations.” The account of Moses is still more striking. “ And there went forth a wind from the Lord, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, as it were a day’s journey on this side, and as it were a day’s journey on the other side, round about the camp, and as it were two cubits high upon the face of the earth.” Hence, these birds covered the whole camp and the surrounding waste, to the distance of a day’s journey on every side. The only ambiguity lies in the phrase, “ a day’s

^w Psa. lxxviii, 27.

journey ;” whether it means the space over which an individual could travel in one day, in which case it would be much greater—or the whole army could traverse, which would be much less. If the journey of an individual is intended, it might be about thirty miles ; but if the sacred historian refers to the whole army, a third part of this space is as much as they could march in one day in the sandy desert, under a vertical sun. In the opinion of Bochart, this immense cloud of quails covered a space of at least forty miles diameter ; for a day’s journey is at least twenty miles.^x Ludolf thinks, it ought to be reduced to sixteen miles ; and others, to half that number, because, Moses refers to the march of Israel through the desert, encumbered with their women and children, their flocks and herds, and the baggage of the whole nation ; which must have greatly retarded their movements, and rendered the short distance of eight miles more than sufficient for a journey of one day. It is equally doubtful, whether the distance mentioned by Moses, must be measured from the centre, or from the extremities of the encampment ; it is certain, however, that he intends to state the countless numbers of these birds which fell around the tents of Israel.^y

Some interpreters have doubted, whether the next clause refer to the amazing multitude of these birds which strewed the desert, or to the facility with which they were caught ; the wind let them fall by the camp—“ as it were two cubits high upon the face of the earth.” The Seventy, and after them the Vulgate, render it, They flew, as it were two cubits high above the earth. Others imagine, the

^x Hieroz. vol. iii, lib. i, cap. 15, p. 105.

^y Harmer’s Observ. vol. iv, p. 367–374.

quails were piled one above another over all that space, to the height of two cubits ; while others suppose, that the heaps which were scattered on the desert with vacant spaces between, for the convenience of those that went forth to collect them, rose to the height of two cubits. The second opinion seems entitled to the preference ; for the phrase “ to rain,” evidently refers to these birds after they had fallen to the ground, upon which they lay numerous as the drops of rain from the dense cloud. Besides, the people could scarcely have gathered ten homers a piece, in two days, if they had not found the quails lying upon the ground ; for a homer is the largest measure among the Jews, and contains nearly six pints ; according to some Hebrew writers, the load of an ass, from whose name the term is supposed to be derived.

The surprising abundance of these birds may be inferred also from the quantity which the tribes collected : “ And the people stood up all that day, and all that night, and all the next day, and they gathered the quails ; he that gathered least, gathered ten homers.” The persons employed, were not a few of the people, but a great multitude that were not prevented by other domestic engagements or important reasons ; and that discovered on this occasion, much alacrity and perseverance. Unwilling to lose so valuable an opportunity of gratifying their inordinate desires, and providing for their future wants, they continued their active exertions for several days ; and that we may know the result of their diligence, and form some idea of the abundant supply with which divine providence had favoured them, the sacred historian states, “ he that gathered least, gathered ten homers.” This word (הוֹמֵר) homer, is properly distinguished from (עֹמֶר) omer, a much smaller measure, and from (חֲמֹר) hamor, an ass, or the

load which is commonly laid upon that animal. But some writers make it equal to the cor, which is more than double the weight, and is the common load of a camel. But it was not necessary that every one should gather ten camel loads of quails; for God had promised his people flesh for a month, and would have fulfilled his promise by bestowing on every individual the third part of a cor, or camel's burden. The truth of this assertion will appear, when it is considered, that every Israelite received for his daily subsistence, an omer of manna, which is the tenth part of an epha. But an epha is the tenth part of a cor; and by consequence, a cor contains an hundred omers. If then, an omer is sufficient for one day, a cor must be sufficient for an hundred days, that is, for more than three months. Hence, if every Israelite gathered ten cors of quails, they collected thirty times more than God had promised. Bochart endeavours to remove this difficulty, by observing, that Moses, in this verse, speaks only of the heads of families, leaving out of his enumeration, the women, children, and slaves. But it is evident, that Moses did not use the word people, in this restricted sense; for he states, that the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people that gathered the quails, "and the Lord smote them with a very great plague. And the people journeyed from Kibroth-hattaavah; but these things are surely said of the whole people. Dissatisfied with this solution, Bochart proposes another with which he is better pleased: The ten homers are not ten cors, but ten heaps; for in this sense, the word is sometimes used. Thus, in the prophecies of Habbakkuk, homer signifies a heap of many waters;^z and in the book of Exodus, a heap of frogs.^a Onkelos and other interpreters, accordingly render it in

^z Hab. iii, 15.

^a Exod. viii, 14.

this passage, ten heaps. If this be admitted, Moses has not determined the quantity of these birds which every one gathered; but only says, that every one at least gathered ten heaps, that is, by a familiar phrase among the Hebrews, a very great number; for ten is often used in Scripture for many.^b This version ought to be preferred, both on account of what has been already stated, and because the cor is a measure of corn, not of flesh. The view now given is of some value; for if every Israelite gathered ten cors of quails, the number of these birds must have been so great as to exceed all belief. But it has been shewn, that instead of ten cors, an Israelite did not collect and use the third part of one. It is not meant to limit the power of God; but surely no violence should be offered to human belief, by requiring more from it, than God has revealed in his word.^c

The vast multitude of these birds, appears also from the long time that the many thousands of Israel subsisted upon them in the desert. Jehovah promises, with uncommon emphasis, "Ye shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days; but even a whole month." The complete fulfilment of this promise, although not recorded by Moses, may be justly inferred from the great quantity which the people gathered and laid up in store, after drying them in the sun, for their subsistence. The Psalmist distinctly alludes to it in these words: "So they did eat and were filled; for he gave them their own desire." Thus were six hundred thousand footmen, besides women and children, supplied with quails for a whole month, by the

^b See Gen. xxxi, 7. Num. xiv, 22, &c.

^c Bochart. Hieroz. lib. i, cap. 15, p. 106.

power and goodness of Jehovah. In the colder regions of Europe, where the quail is less frequent, this could not have been done without a new creation ; but in warm climates, the case is very different. There these birds are found in immense numbers. From Aristophanes it appears, that no bird was more common in Greece ;^d and Juvenal asserts, that none were of less value at Rome.^e Nor will that appear wonderful, when the assertion of some writers is considered, that, in the beginning of spring, within the space of five miles, an hundred thousand of these birds are sometimes caught in one day ; and this astonishing number continues to be taken for nearly a whole month. Varro asserts, that turtles and quails return from their migrations into Italy, in immense numbers.^f Hence, their flight when they approach the land, is alleged by Pliny, to be “ attended with danger to mariners ; for these birds, wearied with their journey, alight upon the sails, and this always in the night, and sink their frail vessels.”^g The same fact is stated by Solinus as quoted by Bochart : “ When they come within sight of land, they rush forward in large bodies, and with so great impetuosity as often to endanger the safety of navigators ; for they alight upon the sails in the night, and by their weight upset the vessels.” Many places also have borne the name of Ortygia, from the multitude of quails which crowded their fields. Thus, Delos was called Ortygia ; the island of Syracuse was known by the same name, also the city of Ephesus, as well as a grove very near it, and another in the vicinity of Miletus. For the same reason, the whole

^d O, 871.^e Sat. 12.^f De Re Rust. lib. iii, cap. 5.^g Nat. Hist. lib. x, cap. 33.—Buffon says, when they meet with a contrary wind they alight on ships. Nat. Hist. vol. ii, p. 408.

country of Libya, received from the ancients the name of Ortygia. But quails abounded no where in greater numbers than in Egypt, and the surrounding countries, whither they were allured by the intense heat of the climate, or the great fertility of the soil. Hence, the remark of Josephus, that the Arabic gulf is peculiarly favourable to the breeding of these birds. We have also heard the testimony of Diodorus, concerning the countless number of quails about Rhinocolura; and the ancients mention a species of quail peculiar to Egypt, which is so numerous at a certain season of the year, that the inhabitants, unable to consume them all, are compelled to salt them for future use. This was done in times, when, according to Theocritus, the vale of Egypt contained more than thirty thousand cities;^h and by the testimony of Josephus,ⁱ seven hundred and fifty myriads of people, without including the inhabitants of Alexandria.^j From this statement it must be evident, that in order to supply the many thousands of Israel with quails for a whole month, no act of creation was necessary; but only a strong breeze, to direct the flight of those innumerable flocks, which encumber the African continent, to the camp of Israel. We read that our Lord multiplied the loaves and the fishes, when he fed the attending multitudes; but no inspired writer insinuates, that Jehovah created or multiplied the quails with which he sustained his people in the wilderness. He had only to transport them on the wings of the wind, from the vale of Egypt, and the shores of the Red sea. It was in-

^h Idyll. lib. xvii, l. 79.

ⁱ Antiq. book iii, chap. 1, 5, 13.

^j See Bochart. Hieroz. lib. i, cap. 16, p. 107.—No country abounds more with quails than the Crimea; during the summer these birds spread over the whole country. De Tott's Mem. vol. i, p. 395.

deed a stupendous miracle, to collect such immense numbers, to bring them into the desert precisely at the time which he had appointed, and to let them fall about the camp, that they might be gathered by his people; but the provision itself existed already in the stores of common providence, and required only to be conveyed to the spot where it was needed.

The first supply of quails, was followed by no visible judgment from heaven; for although they were guilty of murmuring against the Lord, he spared them in his love and in his pity; but they provoked him on this occasion, by their indecent desire of good living; by loathing the manna, which was provided for them by his distinguishing kindness; by regretting the provisions which they had enjoyed in Goshen; and by denying the divine power and goodness, which they had already experienced in supplying them with quails, soon after they came out of Egypt, and of which they had every day the most substantial proofs, in giving them bread from heaven. Incensed by this undutiful conduct, Jehovah unequivocally notified his righteous displeasure, before he granted their demands: "Ye shall eat it a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome unto you; because that ye have despised the Lord which is among you, and have wept before him, saying, Why came we forth out of Egypt?" These words are a proof, that he had heard the murmurings of his people with great indignation. When, therefore, the month was completed, and while the flesh with which they had gorged themselves was yet in their mouth, "the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord smote the people with a very great plague." Various are the views which interpreters have given of

this judgment; but their opinion seems entitled to the preference, who suppose it was a fire from heaven, by which some of the people were consumed. Their undutiful murmurings were punished in this manner, a very short time before: “And when the people complained, it displeased the Lord; and the Lord heard it, and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the Lord burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp.”^k Bochart indeed, considers this brief statement as a summary view of the scene which is more minutely described in the rest of the chapter. The same place, he thinks, is called Taberah, from the conflagration, and Kibroth-hataavah, “because there they buried the people that lusted.” But this opinion seems to rest upon no solid foundation; no trace of a more brief, and then of a more extended narrative, can be discovered in the passage. The sacred writer plainly describes two different calamities, of which the first was indisputably by fire, which renders it not improbable that the second was also produced by the same devouring element. This probability is greatly increased by the words of David, in his sublime description of this very judgment: “Therefore, the Lord heard, and was wroth; so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel; because they believed not God, nor trusted in his salvation.”^l An instance of similar perverseness is recorded of this people, soon after they came out of Egypt.^m But, although they were perhaps equally blameable, they were not subjected to the same punishment; for, in this instance, Jehovah bestowed upon them a supply of quails that evening; and the day after, he rained manna from

^k Exod. xi, 1.^l Psa. lxxviii, 21.^m Exod. xvi, 2.

heaven around their tents. He had a right to punish them for their iniquity ; but he graciously turned away his anger, and yielded to their importunities. And for this forbearance, several reasons may be assigned. If any fall a second time into the sins which had been already forgiven, he is more guilty than before ; because he both insults the justice, and tramples on the grace and mercy of God. Besides, in this instance, the people of Israel murmured against their leaders, because they were pressed by famine, and in want of all the necessaries of life. But in the desert of Paran, bread from heaven descended in daily showers around their encampment, in sufficient quantity to satisfy the whole congregation ; they lived on angel's food ; they were satiated with the bread of heaven ; and by consequence, the flesh which they demanded with so great eagerness and importunity, was not required to supply their necessity, but to gratify their lustful desires. When they murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness of Sin, they had but lately come out of Egypt—they were still in a rude and untutored state, for the law was not yet given ; but in Paran they rebelled, after long and various experience of the divine care and goodness, after the law was given, and after they had been instructed by many sufferings, in the evil nature and bitter consequences of sin ; their conduct, therefore, was much more criminal, and deservedly subjected them to severe castigation.

The Cock.

No certain allusions to this domestic fowl, occur in the Old Testament Scriptures. But in the writings of the apostles and the evangelists, we find two unequivocal references to it ; one to the crowing of the cock, and the other

to the tender affection of the hen for her brood. Our blessed Lord refers to the former, in his warning to the disciples: "Watch ye, therefore, for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning."ⁿ The cock-crowing was, properly, the time which intervened between midnight and the morning; which is evident from the words of the evangelist just quoted. Availing themselves of this circumstance, the Romans divided their day and night into various parts, which they distinguished by appropriate names. Midnight was the point at which their day commenced and terminated; then followed, what they called the inclination of midnight; after that, the cock-crowing; then the conticinium, or time of silence, when all was still; this was followed by the dawn, which ushered in the morning; and this in its turn was succeeded by the noon day. The Greek term which denotes the cock-crowing, is often used in the plural number, because that wakeful bird announces more than once, the approach of light. He begins to chaunt at midnight; and again raises his warning voice, between midnight and the dawn; which, on this account, is often called the second cock-crowing. Thus Juvenal:

"Quod tamen ad cantum galli facit ille secundi,

Proximus ante diem caupo sciet."

Sat. ix, l. 106.

The second cock-crowing corresponds with the fourth watch of the night; for, says Ammianus, he ascended mount Casius, from whence, at the second crowing of the cock, the rising sun might be first descried.^o But, according to Pliny, from the towering height of mount Casius, the sun might be seen at the fourth watch, ascend-

ⁿ Mark xiii, 35.

^o Ammianus, lib. xxii.

ing through the shades of night.^p But, although the cock crows twice in the night, yet, when any thing is said to be done at the time of the cock-crowing, without stating whether it is the first or the second, it must always be understood of the last, which is by way of distinction called the cock-crowing, either because the warning is more loud and cheerful, or because it is more useful to mankind, as it rouses them from their slumbers to the active scenes of life ; or, in fine, because the time of the first warning is called by another name, the middle of the night. Thus, the evangelist Mark agrees with the uninspired writers of antiquity, in placing the time of the second crowing between the hour of midnight and the morning. And Isidore, as quoted by Bochart, says, it was called the cock-crowing, because then the cock announced the approach of day. Hence it is evident he meant the time of the second crowing. Horace also refers to the same hour in these lines :

“ *Agricolum laudat juris legumque peritus
Sub galli cantum consultor ubi ostia pulsat.*”

Sat. i, l. 10.

It appears from these, and many other testimonies, which the learned reader will find in Bochart, that the same time was now called simply, the cock-crowing ; and now more expressly, the second cock-crowing :^q from whence it has been justly thought, that Mark may be easily reconciled with the other evangelists, in relation to the time when the apostle Peter thrice denied his Lord. According to Mark, the Saviour informed his presumptuous disciple, “ Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.” As the

^p Plin. Hist. Natur. lib. x, cap. 22.

^q Hieroz. lib. i, cap. 17, p. 120, 121.

Saviour had foretold, the cock crew after the first, and a second time after the third denial; but according to the other evangelists, the cock did not crow before he denied him the third time. The words of Christ, according to Matthew, are these: "Verily I say unto thee, that this night before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice."^r In Luke: "I tell thee Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me."^s In John: "Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, the cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice."^t But, it is no difficult task to reconcile these different accounts; for the prediction clearly refers to the time of the second crowing, before when, according to all the four evangelists, Peter had thrice denied his Master. These phrases, The cock shall not crow, or, Before the cock shall crow, are the same as if he had said, Before the time of the cock-crowing, or the cock shall not give that loud and cheerful alarm, from which the time, called emphatically, the cock-crowing (*αλεκτοροφωνία*) is dated, before thou shalt deny me thrice. No doubt can reasonably be entertained, that Mark, who was the disciple of Peter, recorded the very words of Christ, as he received them from the apostle. But it was sufficient for the others to mention the principal fact, that Christ not only foresaw and predicted the three-fold denial of Peter, but also fixed the time when it should happen, before the second crowing. The words of our Lord are certainly to be understood of the second, because this only was simply called the cock-crowing; yet Mark expressly asserts it, and declares also, that the first denial of Peter preceded the first cock-crowing. Here it may

^r Matth. xxvi, 34.^s Luke xxii, 34.^t John xiii, 38.

be objected, that between the first and second crowing, the fourth part of the night commonly intervenes ; which at that time was nearly three hours ; for in Judea, at the time of the year when our Lord was crucified, the nights are more than eleven hours in length ; but between the first and second denial of Peter, scarcely the half of that time could have elapsed. This appears from the narrative of the evangelist Luke, in which it is stated, that when the terrified apostle had first denied his Lord to the maid, as he sat by the fire, “ a little after, another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, man, I am not ;” which was the second denial. “ And about the space of one hour after, another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth, this fellow also was with him ; for he is a Galilean.” “ And Peter denied the third time, and immediately the cock crew.” To this objection it may be sufficient to reply, that the statement of the evangelist is extremely brief ; and while Peter endeavoured to clear himself of the charge, many words might pass on both sides, which are not put on the record, and the discussion be protracted through a great part of the night. Nor will it follow from the phrase which Luke uses, *after a little while*, that no time, or only a very short interval passed, between the first and second denial ; for the apostle John, in his gospel, mentions many incidents which happened in that time ; and the third denial, which Luke says happened about the space of one hour after the second denial, is in Matthew and Mark said to have taken place “ a little after.” Hence, this phrase may denote a much longer space of time than is commonly supposed. Besides, Luke does not say, that the third denial happened precisely at the distance of one hour, but about the space of one hour,

which might therefore be considerably more. In fine, although the fourth part of the night commonly intervenes between the first and second crowing, it is not always the case ; for it is well known, that these birds do not always crow at stated times. Some cock, therefore, after the third denial of Peter, might anticipate the usual time of announcing the approach of morning, by one hour. It may be objected again, when Peter denied his Lord, the scribes, the priests, and the elders, were met in the house of Caiaphas, and sitting in judgment on the Saviour ; while the apostle waited the issue, among the servants in the hall. But it is not likely that the council would prolong their sitting through so great a part of the night. Who can believe, that so many persons of the first rank among the Jews, would spend almost the whole night on the judgment seat, when the cause for which they were assembled could, with equal convenience, be referred to another time ? But this objection is urged in vain ; for the fact, that they actually did so, is certain. This will appear, when it is considered how many things were done that night, before the apostle denied his Lord the third time. When the evening was come, that is at the setting of the sun, our Lord celebrated the passover with his disciples ; he then washed their feet, and addressed them on the occasion. After finishing this discourse, he instituted the supper ; then he reproofed his disciples for their contentions with one another about the supremacy. When he had finished this reproof, he sung an hymn, which, according to the Talmudical writers, consisted of a number of psalms. This act of devotion being ended, he went out to the mount of Olives,—came to the garden of Gethsemane—withdraw from his disciples to pray—and after

praying an hour, he returned to the disciples, whom he found asleep, and reproved them for their unseasonable indulgence ; this he did a second, and a third time. In the meantime, Judas arrived with a numerous party, and apprehended him ; and led him away, first to Annas, and then to Caiaphas, in whose house, the scribes, the priests, and the elders were assembled. Into the hall of judgment, Peter with difficulty obtained admission ; and, being recognized as one of his followers, denied his Lord. Christ was placed at the bar, and interrogated by Caiaphas ; this being done, Peter denied his Master a second time, and again in the space of an hour. It will appear to every reflecting and candid mind, that these transactions must have occupied the greater part of the night. The dispatch which the high priest and his council made, indeed would seem quite extraordinary, if we did not consider that the passover, their most solemn festival, was just ready to commence, and that the worst passions of their depraved hearts were now in a state of high excitement against the Redeemer.

It only remains that we make a few remarks on the tender care which the hen displays in watching over her young. She provides for them with unwearied diligence ; she guards them from the attacks of their enemies with unceasing jealousy, giving the alarm on the least appearance of danger, and evincing a fearless intrepidity in their defence ; with kind affection she gathers them under her wing, and cherishes them with the genial warmth of her own body. These are the allusions involved in the words of our Lord ; “ O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children, even as

a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not.”^u The term *ορνις*, which the evangelists use in recording this affecting address, originally signified a bird of any kind; but in the progress of language, its meaning was gradually contracted, till it became appropriated to the household fowl. The truth of this remark is placed beyond a reasonable doubt by the learned Borchart, to whose elaborate work the reader is referred.^v In Homer and Hesiod, the word is used in its most general signification; but in the time of Plato, it began to suffer a change, and to be restricted to the domestic fowl; and for some ages, it was employed to denote indiscriminately the male and the female, till custom, the great arbiter of language, determined that it should be the proper name of the latter.^w In the evangelists, therefore, *ορνις* does not signify a bird in general, as it is rendered in the Vulgate, and some other versions of Luke, but the hen, as they properly translate it in Mathew. It is used in this restricted sense in the Syriac, and by most of the ancients, except Ambrose on Luke, and in the authorised English version. It is justly appropriated to the hen, because she hatches her eggs like other birds, and also gathers her brood under her wings, and cherishes them with maternal heat. Hence the Arabian writers emphatically call her *the mother of congregation*. The renowned Augustine often asserts, that it is peculiar to the hen to be so affected with the weakness of her chicks, as to become herself infirm and sick. Thus, in his Commentary on the fifty-eighth Psalm, he observes that Christ became feeble unto death, and assumed the flesh of infirmity, that he might

^u Matth. xxiii, 37, and Luke xiii, 34.

^v Hieroz. lib. i, cap. 18, p. 125.

^w Ibid.

gather the children of Jerusalem under his wings, as the hen becomes feeble with her brood. And a little after; I mention a thing well known, which happens every day in our presence, how her voice becomes hoarse, her whole body rough and shaggy, her wings hang down, and her plumage is disordered. And on the ninetieth Psalm, many birds hatch and rear their young before us, but no bird sympathises with its young like the hen. Let us attend to the swallow, the stork, and the sparrow; when we see these birds out of their nests, it cannot be known that they have young. But the breeding hen is known by the weakness of her voice, the disorder of her plumage, and the universal change which her maternal tenderness produces.^x Because they are weak, she becomes weak.—No figure, then, could be more happily chosen to express the infinite love of Christ, and his ardent desire to deliver his people from the sin and misery of their fallen condition, his watchful care and powerful protection, and the safety and happiness of those that believe in his name.

The Peacock.

This beautiful bird, which is now familiarly known to perhaps every nation of Europe, does not seem to have found his way into Palestine before the reign of Solomon. That rich and powerful monarch, added to his unexampled wisdom, a taste for natural history; and every three years his fleets returned laden with the most curious and valuable products of distant regions. The elegant shape, the majestic mein, and the splendid plumage of the peacock, rendered him a present not unbefitting the greatest king the world had ever seen; and the servants of Solomon, stimulated probably not more by a sense of

^x Bochart. Hieroz. lib. i, cap. 18, p. 126.

duty, than by inclination to gratify their amiable sovereign, were forward to place it under his eye.^y “For the king had at sea a navy of Tarshish, with the navy of Hiram: once in three years came the navy of Tarshish, bringing gold and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks.”^z The Hebrew name of this bird is (תוכים) thochijim, which the Greek interpreters, not understanding, left without explanation; but the Chaldee, the Syriac, and other translators, render it the peacock. The origin of the Hebrew name is unknown; and accordingly, various are the conjectures in which the learned have indulged their imaginations, or critical acumen. Bochart imagines it is an exotic term; and changing the Hebrew (תוכים) thochijim by inversion into (כותיים) cuthijim, he traces it to a Cushite root, intended to denote the native country of the peacock. Nor is it uncommon for an animal to derive its proper name from the place of its original residence. The pheasant is indebted for her name to the Phasis, a river of Colchus, on the banks of which she first drew the attention of the postdiluvian tribes; and African and Numidian birds are so called from Africa or Numidia, the country where they were hatched, and where they commonly fixed their abode. On the same principle, the peacock himself is every where called by the ancients the bird of Media or Persia, in which the land of Cush, or Cuth, was situate, because he came originally from that region.^a

Aristophanes calls the peacock the bird of Persia; Suidas, the bird of Media; and Clemens Pædagogus, the

^y Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. iii, cap. 42, and lib. v, cap. 21, 32.

^z 1 Kings x, 22, and 2 Chron. ix, 21.

Bochart. Hieroz. lib. i, cap. 20, p. 136.

bird of India. Diodorus observes, that Babylonia produces a very great number of peacocks marked with colours of every kind.^b In the opinion of Bochart, India is the true native country of that bird; but it is frequently mentioned as a native of Persia and Media, because it was first imported from India into these countries, from whence it passed into Judea, Egypt, and Greece, and gradually found its way into the other parts of the globe. Hence the peacocks, which were imported in the fleet of Solomon, probably came from Persia; for in that long voyage of three years, in which they visited Taprobane, it is by no means probable they would always pursue a direct course; but along the various windings of the coast, search for any thing that suited their purpose. It is even probable that they sailed up the Persian gulf, and touched at the renowned isles of the Phœnicians, Tyrus or Tylus, and Aradus, at no great distance from Persia.^c

The elegance of the peacock's form, and the brilliancy of his plumage, seem to be the principal reasons which induced the mariners of Solomon, to bring him into Palestine, and that the sacred historian so distinctly mentions the circumstance. Nature, according to the remark of Varro,^d has certainly assigned the palm of beauty to the peacock; but since the introduction of the ape into Palestine, an animal neither distinguished by the elegance of his form, nor the brilliancy of his colour, is mentioned at the same time, the historian might intend to direct the reader's attention, as well to the riches and splendour of Solomon, as to his taste for rare and curious articles of natural history. In the Lesser Asia, and in Greece, the

^b Lib. ii, cap. 53.

^c See Bochart. Hieroz. lib. i, c. 20, p. 137.

^d De Re Rustica, lib. iii, cap. 6.

peacock was long held in high estimation, and frequently purchased by the great and the wealthy, at a very great price. We learn from Plutarch, that in the age of Pericles, a person at Athens made a great fortune by rearing these birds, and shewing them to the public, at a certain price, every new moon; and to this exhibition, the curious Greeks crowded from the remotest parts of the country.^e The keeper of these birds, the same author informs us, sold a male and female for a thousand drams, about thirty-six pounds of our money. Peacocks were very rare in Greece, even in the time of Alexander, who, by the testimony of Ælian, was struck with astonishment at the sight of these birds on the banks of the Indus; and from admiration of their beauty, commanded every person that killed one of them, to be severely punished.^f At Rome, as the same historian relates, when Hortensius first killed one for supper, he was brought to trial, and condemned to pay a fine. Their eggs, according to Varro, were sold in his time at five denarii, or more than three shillings a piece; and the birds themselves commonly at about two pounds of our money. The same writer affirms, that M. Aufidius Luzco derived an yearly revenue of more than sixty thousand pieces of silver, which amounts to four hundred and sixty-eight pounds fifteen shillings sterling, from the sale of peacocks; for although their flesh is not better tasted than that of a domestic fowl, they were sold at a much greater price on account of the richness and brilliancy of their plumes. These statements prove, that the peacock was deemed, in remote ages, a present not unworthy of a king.

^e Langhorne's Plut. vol. ii, p. 3.

^f De Nat. Animal. lib. v, cap. 21.

The Sparrow.

The habits and manners of this little bird are familiarly known, and require no particular description. Its Hebrew name is (צפור) tsippor, a term which, in the sacred volume, is often used to denote small birds of any kind.^g In this general sense it occurs in Solomon's affecting description of the closing scene of human life: "He shall rise up (לקול הצפור) at the sound of the bird." Some interpreters give it a more restricted sense, translating it, he shall rise up at the sound of the cock. This interpretation is rejected by some writers, because the original term, they allege, is used only to denote birds of inferior size. But in the sacred text, the word is employed to signify birds of every species. In the law of Moses, the people of Israel were forbidden to make "the likeness of any winged fowl (צפור) that flieth in the air."^h But it could not have been the intention of the lawgiver, to prohibit only the idolatrous veneration of smaller birds; the precept certainly embraced "any winged fowl that flieth in the air," in the utmost latitude of the term. When the same God conceded to his people the use of every clean bird, (צפור) he certainly did not mean to withhold from their table, fowls of a larger size.ⁱ And who ever restricted to small birds, the law which protected the dam, while it suffered the passing Israelite to carry away the young? "If a bird's nest (קן צפור) chance to be before thee in the way, in any tree, or on the ground, whether they be young ones or eggs, and the dam sitting upon the young or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young."^j Nor can it be denied, that birds of

^g Bochart. Hieroz. lib. i, p. 145. ⁱ Deut. xiv, 11.

^h Deut. iv, 17. ^j Deut. xxii, 6.

every wing are subjected to the sway of man by the holy Psalmist, as well as all the beasts of the field, and the fishes of the sea : “ Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands ; thou hast put all things under his feet ; all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field ; the fowls of the air, (צפור שמים) and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.”^k Or when the “ beasts, and all cattle ; creeping things, and flying fowl,” are invited to praise their Maker ;^l is it to be supposed, that birds of a larger size are exempted ?

But although the word (צפור) tsippor, is a name common to birds and fowls of every wing ; it is often used, as the Hebrew writers assert, in a more restricted sense, to signify the sparrow. Tsippor, says Kimchi, on the eighty-fourth Psalm, denotes a small bird, which they commonly call the sparrow. Aquinas also admits, that it is the name of a particular species of bird ; and a little after, “ The small bird is known by the name of a sparrow.” Jerome therefore renders the word sparrow ;^m and the Greek translators give the same interpretation, in five different parts of the Psalms ; and also in the twelfth chapter of Ecclesiastes, and the third chapter of Lamentations.ⁿ On the other hand, the Greek word *σπάρδις* which occurs in the gospels of Matthew and Luke, and signifies a sparrow, is translated by the Syriac interpreter tsipparin ; which every person in the least acquainted with oriental literature knows, is, with a very slight change, the Hebrew term tsipporim. Nor is it peculiar to the Hebrews to give the same name to the sparrow, and to

^k Psa. viii, 6, 7, 8.

^m Lev. xiv, 4.

^l Psa. cxlviii, 10.

ⁿ Ver. 6 and 52.

fowls of the largest size ; for the word *εραθος*, which in Greek signifies a sparrow, is also given to the hen. Thus, Nicander, as quoted by Bochart :

*Ἡ τε μυελοίντα χαλικρότερον ποτον ισχούς
Ορνίθος εραθοιο κατοικαδός.*

“ Or a pure potable medicine full of marrow, may be obtained from a fowl, the domestic sparrow, that is, the hen.” In imitation of the Greeks, the Roman writers call the ostrich, which is the largest fowl in existence, the marine sparrow. Both Plautus and Ausonius give it this name ; the words of the last writer are,

“ *Ovum tu coque passeris marini.*”

“ Boil thou the egg of the marine sparrow.”^o And that these authors meant the ostrich, is confirmed by Festus, who declares, that the marine sparrow signified the bird which they commonly called the struthio-camel, or the ostrich.^p

Interpreters have not been able to determine in what parts of Scripture, the Hebrew term (צפור) *tsippor*, ought to be translated sparrow. Some suppose that Moses intends this bird in the law concerning the purification of the leprosy : “ Then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed, two birds alive.”^q One of these birds was to be killed over running water ; and the living bird, after certain ceremonies described in the law, was ordered to be let loose into the open field. The same ceremonies were commanded to be observed in cleansing the leprous house. Jerome and many succeeding interpreters, render the word צפורים used in the law, sparrows. But it is evident from an atten-

^o Plautus in *Persa*, Act. ii. Ausonius, *Epist.* 11.

^p Bochart. *Hieroz.* lib. i, c. 21, p. 146.

^q Lev. xiv, 1, 53.

tive perusal of the fourth verse, that it signifies birds in general. “Then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed, two birds alive and clean.” Now, if the sparrow was a clean bird, there could be no use in commanding a clean one to be taken, since every one of the species was ceremonially clean; but if it was unclean by law, then it could not be called clean. The term here must therefore signify birds in general, of which some were ceremonially clean, and some unclean; which rendered the specification in the command, proper and necessary. From the terms of the law it appears, that any species of clean birds might be taken on such occasions, domestic or wild; provided only they were clean, and the use of them conceded by the laws of Moses to the people.

Another passage, in which the word *tsippor* is supposed to refer to the sparrow, occurs in that sublime description of the leviathan, in the book of Job, and is couched in these terms: “Wilt thou play with him as with a bird? or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens?”^a But there is no necessity to confine the original term here, to the sparrow; since many other birds may be named, which are equally pleasing to young people of both sexes. Jerome therefore translates it without mentioning the sparrow: Wilt thou play with him as with a bird? or bind him to thy maidens? an interpretation which has been followed by the greater part of modern expositors.

The royal Psalmist, is by some interpreters supposed to refer to the same bird, in these words: “In the Lord put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?” In the Greek version, it is translated; How say ye to my soul, Flee ye as a sparrow to your

^a Job xli, 5.

mountain. This interpretation has been followed by the Vulgate, and other expositors. But Jerome, with more propriety, renders it, Flee as a bird to your mountain; and his version has been adopted by the greater part of modern translators. The sparrow is not a mountain bird; and David, whose sufferings are described in the Psalm, complains, that his implacable sovereign pursued him, not like a sparrow, but like a partridge upon the mountains.^r Some authors indeed mention a bird on the shores of the lake de Como in Italy, which they call a mountain sparrow; but Gesner proves by many arguments, that it is a species of blackbird.

The same inspired writer uses the original term in a restricted sense, in that beautiful Psalm, where he seems to envy the swallow and the sparrow the happiness of approaching the altar, of which he was deprived by the rebellion of an unnatural son. “Yea, the sparrow (צפור) hath found out an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young: thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my king and my God.”^s The term in this passage is connected with the proper name of the swallow; and therefore cannot be understood as the common name of the feathered race, but like the other, must denote a particular species of bird, which, by the general suffrage of interpreters, is the sparrow. This idea is confirmed by the plaintive description of David, according to which, that little bird, under the direction of instinct alone, provides a habitation for herself, in the abodes of men, where she rears her young, and enjoys the sweets of repose. Some of these birds, the Psalmist had probably seen constructing their nests, and propagating their kind, in the

^r 1 Sam. xxvi, 20.

^s Psa. lxxxiv, 3.

buildings near the altar, or in the courts of the temple ; and piously longs to revisit a scene so dear to his heart. The altar is here by a synecdoche of a part for the whole, to be understood of the tabernacle, among the rafters of which, the sparrow and the swallow were allowed to nestle ; or rather, for the buildings which surrounded the sacred edifice, where the priests and their assistants had their ordinary residence. Even these exterior buildings were extremely desirable to the exiled monarch, because of their vicinity to the splendid symbols of the divine presence, and the instruments of his worship. The holy Psalmist sometimes wished for the wings of a dove, to waft him into the desert from the cruel oppression of his enemies ; but on this occasion, when he is compelled to flee for his life into the wilderness, he longs for the enjoyment of a sparrow, which flew unobserved into the courts of the tabernacle, and flitted among the beams without interruption.

The sparrow has been considered by some interpreters as a solitary moping bird, which loves to dwell on the house top alone ; and so timid, that she endeavours to conceal herself in the darkest corners, and passes the night in sleepless anxiety. Hence they translate the words of the Psalmist : I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top.^t But her character and manners by no means agree with their description. She is a pert, loquacious, bustling creature, which, instead of courting the dark and solitary corner, is commonly found chirping and fluttering about in the crowd.^u The term in this text, therefore, must be understood in its general sense, and probably refers to some variety of the owl. Jerome ren-

^t Psa. cii, 7.

^u Buffon's Nat. Hist. vol. iii, p. 434.

ders it, I was as a solitary bird on the roof. The Hebrew text contains nothing which can with propriety suggest the sparrow, or any similar bird; and indeed, nothing seems to be more remote from the mind of David: all the circumstances seem to indicate some bird of the night; for the Psalmist, bending under a load of severe affliction, shuns the society of men, and mingles his unceasing groans and lamentations with the mournful hootings of those solitary birds, which disturb the lonely desert. “By reason of the voice of my groaning, my bones cleave to my skin; I am like a pelican of the wilderness; I am like an owl of the desert.” He then proceeds with his comparison: “I watch, and am as a bird upon the house top alone:” I watch, that is, I have spent a sleepless night; or as it is paraphrased in the Chaldee, I have watched the whole night long, without once closing my eyes. Every part of this description directs our attention to some nocturnal bird, which hates the light, and comes forth from its hiding place when the shadows of evening fall, to hunt the prey, and from the top of some ruined tower, to tell its joys or its sorrows to a slumbering world.* These characters are easily recognised in Virgil’s beautiful description of the owl:

“Solaque culminibus ferali carmine bubo
Visa queri et longas in fletum ducere voces.” *Æn.* lib. iv, l. 462.

But, with what propriety can the sparrow be called a solitary bird, when it is gregarious, and, so far from loving solitude, builds her nest in the roofs of our dwellings? Natural historians mention two kinds of this bird—one domestic, and the other wild. But the wild sparrow does

* Aristotel. Hist. lib. ix, cap. 34. *Ælian de Nat. Animal.* lib. i, cap. 29. *Varro de Lingua Latina*, lib. iv. *Plin. Hist. Nat.* lib. xxix, c. 4.

not repair for shelter like her relative, mentioned by David, to the human dwelling ; she never takes her station on the house top, but seeks a home in her native woods. If the allusion, therefore, be made to the sparrow, it must be to the domestic, not to the wild species. It is in vain to argue, that the domestic sparrow may be called solitary, when she is deprived of her mate ; for she does not, like the turtle, when she loses her spouse, remain in a state of inconsolable widowhood, but accepts, without reluctance, the first companion that solicits her affections. Hence the Psalmist undoubtedly refers to some species of the owl, whose dreary note and solitary dispositions, are celebrated by almost every poet of antiquity.*

The word is used by Solomon, in the general sense, in his affecting description of the wakeful debility of extreme old age : “ He shall rise up at the voice of the bird.” In the Greek version it is translated, the voice of the sparrow ; but it is more natural to suppose, that the inspired writer alludes to the note of a larger bird ; probably to the crowing of the cock, which the God of nature has appointed to announce the approach of day. It is not easy to determine, which of these opinions ought to be preferred ; for the original term, as already noticed, signifies birds of any size. It must be confessed, that it gives us a much more striking idea of the lowest ebb of human weakness, to refer the phrase to the feeble note of the sparrow, or the chirping of other small birds at the dawn of day : but “ the voice of the bird” may with equal, perhaps with greater propriety, denote the shrill and powerful clarion of the cock, which rouses the slumbering world to the cares and exertions of active life.

* See Bochart. Hieroz. lib. i, cap. 23, p. 155.

Low in the scale of being as the sparrow has been placed by its creator, it is, according to the declaration of our Lord himself, the object of his unceasing care : “ Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing ? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.”^x In the gospel of Luke, the value of this little bird is represented as still less : “ Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God.”^y It neither attracts our notice by the beauty of its plumage, nor conciliates our esteem by the amiableness of its dispositions and manners ; nor commands our regard by the benefits it bestows ; yet this insignificant animal cannot perish without the express permission of its Maker. This truth was taught by the Royal Psalmist, many ages before the coming of Christ : “ These all wait upon thee, that thou mayst give them their meat in due season. That thou givest them, they gather ; thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good. Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled ; thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.”^z In these quotations, it is not meant, that God, who is infinitely wise, values a sparrow as highly as a man, who is formed after his own image, and for whose use the lower animals were created in the beginning of time. He cannot but love his creatures, according to the nature and the degree of excellence which they possess ; to do otherwise, would argue a defect of wisdom and goodness in his nature and character. The care of divine Providence, therefore, admits of various degrees : the great Preserver does not take care of oxen in the same manner as he watches over the interests of men ; but, according to Paul, makes a distinction in his providential management.

^x Matth. x, 29.^y Luke xii, 6.^z Psa. civ, 27.

“For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen?” It cannot, however, be doubted, that as well oxen as men, and even the meanest creatures, are equally subject to God, who disdains not to govern and preserve the works which he condescended to make. We must beware of setting bounds to his providence, which the greatest effects of his power cannot burthen, nor the smallest escape. Who, that deserves the name of Christian, can believe, that Jehovah knew not the number of the quails with which he supplied his people in the wilderness; or of the fishes which sported in the lake of Genesareth, when, by the command of Christ, the apostle Peter cast his net into the sea? Could he be ignorant how many frogs and locusts he would employ in executing his vengeance upon the oppressors of his people in Egypt? A general knows the number of the troops which he musters for the battle, and leads into the field; and can the omniscient God be ignorant of the numbers which swell the ranks of his army, and march under his banners? Such a supposition is not more repugnant to the uniform declaration of Scripture, than to the light of nature, which taught the ancient heathens, That God not only took care of oxen, but also extended his protection to animals of every species.^a

^a Ælian de Nat. Animal. lib. xi, cap. 31.

For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Both God take care for oxen? It cannot, however, be doubted, that as well oxen as men, and even the meanest creatures, are equally subject to God, who disdains not to govern and preserve the works which he condescended to make. We must beware of setting bounds to his power, which the greatest effects of his power cannot but then, nor the smallest effects. Who, that observes the name of Christian, can believe, that Jehovah knew not the number of the quails with which he supplied his people in the wilderness; or of the fishes which sprung in the lake of Genesareth, when, by the command of Christ, the apostle Peter cast his net into the sea? Could he be ignorant how many frogs and locusts he would employ in executing his vengeance upon the oppressors of his people in Egypt? A general knows the number of the troops which he musters for the battle, and leads into the field; and can the omniscient God be ignorant of the number which swell the ranks of his army, and march under his banners? Such a supposition is not more repugnant to the uniform declaration of Scripture, than to the light of nature, which taught the ancient heathens, That God not only took care of oxen, but also extended his protection to animals of every species.

Long before the time of the Nat. Animal, lib. xi, cap. 31.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF SCRIPTURE

PART III.

OF THE CUSTOMS AND MANNERS OF ANCIENT AND MODERN NATIONS.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF SCIENCE

PART III.

OF THE

CUSTOMS AND MANNERS OF ANCIENT
AND MODERN NATIONS.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF SCRIPTURE.

CHAP. I.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF SCRIPTURE FROM THE PASTORAL LIFE OF THE ORIENTALS.

Oriental Shepherds.—Their wealth and power.—Manner of life.—Flocks and herds.—Immense numbers of their cattle.—Their servants.—Overseers of their property.—The bad shepherd.—The good shepherd.—Wander in search of pasture for their flocks.—Risk their lives in defence of their charge.—Accountable for the flocks under their care.—Exposed to all the vicissitudes of the seasons.—Their great skill, vigilance, and care in the management of their flocks.—Providing water for their flocks.—Digging wells.—Covering their mouth with a stone.—Wells extremely valuable.—To fill them up an act of hostility.—Robbers lurk near them.—Shepherd's implements—His vestments—His bag or srip—His staff and crook—His arms.—Scene of the parable of the good Samaritan.—Time of pasturing the flocks.—Manner of conducting them.—Devoted a part of their leisure to music.—Sometimes lodged in caves.—Their tents.—Furniture and utensils of their tents.—Their coverings of different colours.—Their huts and booths.—Their hospitality.—Their sheep-cotes.—Sheep-washing.—Sheep-shearing—A time of general hilarity.—Making butter.—Coagulating milk.—Trade with the neighbouring cities.—Engage a little in agriculture.—Formed alliances with their neighbours.—Amused themselves by hunting.—Shepherds an abomination to the Egyptians.

THE first man was no sooner expelled from the garden of Eden for his breach of covenant, and doomed to earn his bread with the sweat of his brow, than he attempted to

reduce the more useful animals under his yoke ; and with so much success, that the sacred historian marks it as the proper employment of Abel, his younger son, that he “ was a keeper of sheep.” But it is in Jabal, a son of Cain, that we find the first example of an oriental shepherd: “ he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle.”^a No farther notice is taken of antediluvian shepherds, in the rapid narrative of Moses ; but it is reasonable to suppose, that the descendants of Jabal continued, according to the manners of the east, to follow the employment of their father, till the deluge swept them all away. Noah, it is probable, was devoted to husbandry from his earliest years ; for Moses observes, that immediately after the deluge, he “ began to be an husbandman ;”^b he resumed his labours in the field, which had been interrupted by that dreadful catastrophe. But the cares of the shepherd devolved upon his eldest son Shem, the great progenitor of God’s ancient people—a man, it would seem, imbued with a religious spirit, and devoted to a contemplative life, to which that employment is peculiarly favourable. By him it was transmitted to his renowned descendant Abraham, with whom he lived more than a hundred years. While it appears from the history of Laban, that the other branches of his family continued, after his example, to tend their flocks and their herds on the banks of the Euphrates and its tributary streams; the posterity of Abraham followed the same employment in the fertile pastures of Canaan, for several succeeding ages.^c This is the account which Joseph gave to Pharaoh, when his family came down into Egypt : “ The men are shep-

^a Gen. iv, 20.

^b Chap. ix, 20.

^c Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, cap. 44, p. 441.

herds; for their trade has been to feed cattle; and they have brought their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have."^d And he directed them to say, when they should be admitted to an audience of the king: "Thy servants' trade has been about cattle, from our youth even until now, both we and also our fathers."

The patriarchal shepherds, rich in flocks and herds, in silver and gold, and attended by a numerous train of servants purchased with their money, or hired from the neighbouring towns and villages, acknowledged no civil superior; they held the rank, and exercised the rights of sovereign princes; they concluded alliances with the kings in whose territories they tended their flocks; they made peace or war with the surrounding states; and in fine, they wanted nothing of sovereign authority but the name. Unfettered by the cumbrous ceremonies of regal power, they led a plain and laborious life, in perfect freedom and overflowing abundance. Refusing to confine themselves to any particular spot, (for the pastures were not yet appropriated), they lived in tents, and removed from one place to another in search of pasture for their cattle. Strangers in the countries where they sojourned, they refused to mingle with the permanent settlers, to occupy their towns, and to form with them one people.^e They were conscious of their strength, and jealous of their independence; and

^d Gen. xlvii, 32.

^e In some countries of Africa the modern Bedouin tribes, when the ponds in the desert are dried up, pitch their tents and pasture their flocks in the cultivated regions, among the villages, permission being granted them by the Sultan, who levies heavy duties upon them, paid in cows, camels, and sheep. But in other parts, they refuse to submit to such exactions; and, like the ancient patriarchs, tend their flocks where they please. Burckhardt's Trav. p. 486.

although patient and forbearing, their conduct proved, on several occasions, that they wanted neither skill nor courage to vindicate their rights and avenge their wrongs. In the wealth, the power, and the splendour of patriarchal shepherds, we discover the rudiments of regal grandeur and authority; and in their numerous and hardy retainers, the germ of potent empires. Hence the custom so prevalent among the ancients, of distinguishing the office and duties of their kings and princes, by terms borrowed from the pastoral life:—Agamemnon shepherd of the people, (*Ἀγαμέμνονα ποιμένα λαῶν*), is a phrase to be met with every where in the strains of Homer.^f The sacred writers very often speak of kings under the name of shepherds, and compare the royal sceptre to the shepherd's crook: "He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds; from following the ewes great with young, he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance. So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands."^g And Jehovah said to David himself: "Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel."^h

The royal Psalmist, on the other hand, celebrates under the same allusions, the special care and goodness of God towards himself, and also towards his ancient people. "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." "Give ear, O shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubim, shine forth."ⁱ But to multiply quotations is useless; in an hundred places of Scripture, the church is compared to a sheepfold, the saints to sheep, and the ministers of reli-

^f Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, cap. 44, p. 441.

^g Psa. lxxviii, 70.

^h 2 Sam. v, 2.

ⁱ Psa. xxiii, 1, and lxxx, 1.

gion to shepherds, who must render at last an account of their administration to the Shepherd and Overseer to whom they owe their authority.

The patriarchs did not commit their flocks and herds solely to the care of menial servants and strangers; they tended them in person, or placed them under the superintendence of their sons and their daughters, who were bred to the same laborious employment,^j and taught to perform, without reluctance, the meanest services. Rebecca, the only daughter of a shepherd prince, went to a considerable distance to draw water; and it is evident from the readiness and address with which she let down her pitcher from her shoulder, and gave drink to the servant of Abraham, and afterwards drew for all his camels, that she had been long accustomed to that humble employment. From the same authority we know, that Rachel, the daughter of Laban, kept her father's flocks, and submitted to the various privations and hardships of the pastoral life, in the deserts of Syria.^k The patriarch Jacob, though he was the son of a shepherd prince, kept the flocks of Laban his maternal uncle; and his own sons followed the same business, both in Mesopotamia, and after his return to the land of Canaan. This primeval simplicity was long retained among the Greeks. Homer often sends the daughters of princes and nobles, to tend the flocks, to wash the clothes of the family at the fountain, or in the flowing stream, and to perform many other menial services.^l

^j Varro de Re Rust. lib. ii, cap. 10. Theoc. Idyll. 9. Odyss. lib. xiii, l. 222, 223. Minerva appeared to Ulysses in the form of a very young shepherd, such as the sons of kings are wont to be.

^k D'Arvieux Voy. dans la Palest. p. 230. Dr. Russel's Hist. of Aleppo, MS. note, quoted by Dr. Clarke. Forbes's Orient. Mem. vol. i, p. 79, 80, 191.

^l Iliad, lib. vi, l. 59, 78. Odyss. lib. vi, l. 57, and lib. xii, l. 131.

Adonis, the son of Cinyras, a king of Cyprus, fed his flocks by the streaming rivers:

“Et formosus oves ad flumina pavit Adonis.” *Vir. Ecl.* x, l. 18.

Andromache, the wife of Hector, complains that Achilles had slain her seven brothers when they were tending their flocks and herds.ⁿ Æneas pastured his oxen on mount Ida, when Achilles seized them and forced the Trojan hero to flee.^o Phœbus himself was a keeper of oxen in the groves and valleys of Mount Ida.^p

This custom has descended to modern times; for in Syria the daughters of the Turcoman and Arabian shepherds, and in India the Brahmin women of distinction, are seen drawing water at the village wells, and tending their cattle to the lakes and rivers.

But in the course of ages, the character of the shepherd gradually declined, till it fell into supreme contempt. This was particularly the case in Greece, where it had once been held in the highest estimation, and Theocritus has in his Idylls, left us more than one striking example of the insults which these successors of princes and nobles had to suffer in his time.^q It is by no means improbable that the same feeling operated in other countries; and it is supposed, the prophet Amos alludes to it in the frank avowal which he makes to the priest of Bethel of his original condition: “I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet’s son; but I was an herdman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit.”^r

The flocks and herds of these shepherds were immensely numerous. The sheep of the Bedoween Arabs in Egypt and probably throughout the east, are very fine,

ⁿ *Iliad*, lib. vi, l. 423. ^o *Ib.* lib. xx, l. 90. ^p *Ib.* lib. xxi, l. 448.

^q The learned reader may consult Bochart’s *Hieroz.* lib. ii, c. 39, p. 382.

^r *Amos* vii, 14.

black faced and white faced, and many of them clothed in a brown coloured fleece :”^s And of this superior breed the overgrown flocks of Syrian shepherds consisted. So great was the stock of Abraham and Lot, that they were obliged to separate, because “the land was not able to bear them.” From the present which Jacob made to his brother Esau, consisting of five hundred and eighty head of different sorts, we may form some idea of the countless numbers of great and small cattle, which he had acquired in the service of Laban. In modern times, the numbers of cattle in the Turcoman flocks, which feed on the fertile plains of Syria, are almost incredible. They sometimes occupy three or four days in passing from one part of the country to another. Chardin had an opportunity of seeing a clan of Turcoman shepherds on their march, about two days distance from Aleppo. The whole country was covered with them. Many of their principal people with whom he conversed on the road, assured him, that there were four hundred thousand beasts of carriage, camels, horses, oxen, cows, and asses, and three millions of sheep and goats.^t This astonishing account of Chardin, is confirmed by Dr. Shaw, who states, that several Arabian tribes, who can bring no more than three or four hundred horses into the field, are possessed of more than so many thousand camels, and triple the number of sheep and black cattle. Russel, in his history of Aleppo, speaks of vast flocks which pass that city every year, of which many sheep are sold to supply the inhabitants. The flocks and herds which belonged to the Jewish patriarchs, were not more numerous.^u

^s Dr. Richardson’s Trav. vol. ii, p. 197.

^t MS. vol. vi.

^u Shaw’s Trav. vol. i, p. 303, 309. Russel’s Hist. of Aleppo, vol. i, p. 165, 388, &c. Harmer’s Observ. vol. i, p. 210, 211.

The care of such overgrown flocks, required the attention of many shepherds. These were of different kinds; the master of the family and his children, with a number of herdsmen who were hired to assist them, and felt but little interest in the preservation and increase of their charge. In Hebrew, these persons, so different in station and feeling, were not distinguished by appropriate names; the master, the slave, and the hired servant, were all known by the common appellation of shepherds. The distinction, not sufficiently important to require the invention of a particular term, is expressed among every people by a periphrasis. The only instance in the Old Testament, in which the hired servant is distinguished from the master, or one of his family, occurs in the history of David, where he is said to have left the sheep (על שומר) in the hand of a keeper, while he went down to visit his brethren, and the armies who were fighting against the Philistines under the banners of Saul.^v This word exactly corresponds with the Latin term *custos*, a keeper, which Virgil uses to denote a hireling shepherd, in his tenth Eclogue:

“ Atque utinam ex vobis unus, vestrique fuisset
Aut custos gregis, aut maturæ vinitor uvæ.” 1. 36.

In such extensive pastoral concerns, the vigilance and activity of the master were often insufficient for directing the operations of so many shepherds, that were not unfrequently scattered over a considerable extent of country. An upper servant was therefore appointed to superintend their labours, and take care that his master suffered no injury. In the house of Abraham, this honourable station was held by Eliezer, a native of Damascus, a servant in every respect worthy of so great and good a mas-

^v 1 Sam. xvii, 20.

ter. The numerous flocks of Pharaoh, seem to have required the superintending care of many overseers.^w Doeg, an Edomite, was intrusted with the whole pastoral establishment of Saul.^x But in the reign of David, the important office of chief herdsman was abolished, and the vast flocks and herds of that monarch, were intrusted to a number of superintendants; animals of the same species forming a separate flock, under its proper overseer.^y These overseers, in the language of the Hebrews, were called the princes of the flock; they were treated with great distinction, and seem to have been selected in the reign of David from among the nobles of his court. Eumæus a person of noble birth, agreeably to this custom was charged with the care of the herds of swine belonging to Ulysses.^z The office of chief shepherd, is frequently mentioned by the classic authors of antiquity. Diodorus relates from Ctesias, that Simma was overseer of the royal flocks under Ninus, king of Assyria.^a According to Plutarch, one Samo managed the flocks and herds of Neoptolemus, the king of the Molossians. The office of chief shepherd was also known among the Latins; for, in the seventh *Æneid*, Tyrrheus is named as governor of the royal flocks:

——— “Tyrrheusque pater, cui regia parent

Armenta, et late custodia credita campi.”

l. 485.

And Livy informs us, that Faustulus held the same office under Numitor, king of the Latins.^b But it is needless to multiply quotations;^c every scholar knows, that the Greek and Roman classics abound with allusions to this office,

^w Gen. xlvii, 6.

^x 1 Sam. xxi, 7.

^y 1 Chron. xxvii, 29.

^z Odyssey, lib. xiv, l. 48, 107; and lib. xx, l. 173, 185.

^a Lib. ii, cap. 4.

^b Book i.

^c Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, cap. 44, p. 444, 445.

which in those days was one of great importance and dignity, on the faithful discharge of which, the power and splendour of an eastern potentate greatly depended.^d The office of chief shepherd, therefore, being in pastoral countries one of great trust, of high responsibility, and of distinguished honour, is with great propriety applied to our Lord by the apostle Peter: "And when the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory which fadeth not away."^e The same allusion occurs in these words of Paul: "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will."^f

The only other distribution of oriental shepherds, mentioned in the holy Scriptures, is into good and bad. A bad or foolish shepherd is thus described by the prophet: "And the Lord said unto me, Take unto thee yet the instruments of a foolish shepherd. For, lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land, which shall not visit those that are cut off, neither shall seek the young one, nor heal that which is broken, nor feed that which standeth still; but he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces. Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock."^g In this passage, the prophet fixes a mark of indelible infamy upon the unfaithful shepherd; he calls him a person

^d The guardian or controller of the royal herds of mares, which are very large, is an officer in Persia of considerable consequence, and is selected always from men of rank and importance in the state: and his office is to register every foal as it falls. He has subordinate agents, entrusted severally with the charge of twenty mares, and with the choice of their pastures. Morier's Trav. vol. i, p. 302.

^e 1 Pet. i, 4, 5.

^f Heb. xiii, 20.

^g Zech. xi, 16.

of no use. A man of nought, was among the Hebrews, an expression of utter contempt. The idols which the heathens worshipped, they accordingly stigmatized as things of nought, or of no value: "An idol," says the apostle Paul, "is nothing," or of no value in the world.^h In the same light the sorrowful patriarch regarded his unkind friends: "Ye are all physicians of no value."ⁱ Such were the rulers of Israel in the days of Zechariah; they were foolish or unprofitable shepherds, who neglected every part of their duty; they neither brought back the sheep which had wandered from the fold, and knew not how to return; nor visited that which was ready to perish. They were not careful to bind up the fractured bone, nor restore the dislocated limb; nor to furnish those that were vigorous and healthy with food, to preserve them in good condition: but they rioted on the flesh of the fat; they tore their limbs asunder; and like a company of rapacious wolves, they devoured every thing, not sparing even the meanest and the least useful parts of the carcase. By this hyperbole, the prophet meant, that the rulers of his people, disregarding the duties of their office, and the plainest dictates of justice and equity, turned every thing to their own advantage.

The prophet Jeremiah pronounces a curse upon the unfaithful shepherds, by whom he means the proud and oppressive rulers of his people: "Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the Lord. Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel, against the pastors that feed my people: Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them; behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your do-

^h 1 Cor. viii, 5.

ⁱ Job xiii, 4.

ings, saith the Lord.”¹ No shepherd perhaps is so foolish and wicked, as literally to scatter the flock, intrusted to his care, and drive them away ; this is rather the work of lions and wolves, that prowl about the fold, watching the favourable moment to seize their victim. But they scattered the flock, by suffering them to wander, and neglecting to visit and bring them back to the fold. The hiphil form of the Hebrew verb, often admits of this passive sense ; thus, the hiphil of the verb (חיה) hiah, to live, signifies not to cause, but to permit a person to live ; and it is extremely probable, that the prophet uses the verb (נדה) nadah, in the hiphil form, in the same sense here. This interpretation seems to correspond with a passage in Homer :

— αἰ τ' ἐν ορεσσι
Ποιμενος αφραδισι διελμαγε. *Il. lib. xvi, l. 354.*

“ Like ravenous wolves, which rush with vehement impetuosity on the lambs or the kids, that by the folly of the shepherd are scattered on the mountains.”

The prophet Ezekiel has imitated, and beautifully amplified, the metaphor of Jeremiah : “ Woe to the shepherds of Israel, that do feed themselves ! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks ? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed ; but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost ; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they be scattered, because there is no shepherd ; and they become meat to all

¹ Jer. xxiii, 1.

the beasts of the field, when they were scattered. My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill; yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them.”^j All the care of these foolish, these unfaithful shepherds, was, to enrich and aggrandize themselves. Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? The common sense of mankind finds no difficulty in answering the question; we shall find it in the beautiful lines of Virgil:

— “et admonuit: pastorem, Tytire, pingues
Pascere oportet oves.” Ecl. vi, l. 4, 5.

It becomes a shepherd to feed his lusty flocks; this is the very design of his office, and he betrays his trust if he do not provide suitable food for them, or conduct them to where it may be found. Instead of this, these shepherds fed themselves; they thought of nothing but how to indulge their own luxurious appetites, securing the profits of their places, fleecing their unhappy subjects, and even cutting them off by mock trials, in order to get possession of their property. Disregarding the welfare of those committed to their care, they fed not the flock: either they were so ignorant, that they knew not how to feed them; or so lazy and slothful, they could not make the necessary exertions; or so treacherous and unfaithful, they neither desired nor intended to perform their duty. They took no care to vindicate those that had suffered wrong, nor to defend the innocent from the craft or the violence of their enemies. The magistrate suffered the poor to starve for want of the common necessities of life; the priest allowed them to grow up in ignorance and vice, a burden to themselves, and a nuisance to society; and the

^j Ezek. xxxiv, 2, &c.

statesman, intent only to enrich himself and his connections, applied no suitable or effectual remedies to the growing distempers which threatened the vitals of the state. Wild misrule and confusion every where prevailed, and threatened to overwhelm all orders of men in one common destruction. Alarmed by these public calamities, to which no end could be discovered, many left their native land, already weakened and impoverished, to linger out a precarious and miserable existence in foreign countries, resigning the place of their father's sepulchres, an easy prey to the first invader. Yet these wretched exiles were neither sought for, nor encouraged to return; but were rather confirmed in their determination to spend the remainder of their years in voluntary banishment, by the unrelenting cruelties and oppressions which the friends and relations whom they left behind them, were compelled to endure. This character of the unfaithful shepherd, remarkably corresponds with that which has been drawn by the pen of Virgil:

“ Hic alienus oves custos bis mulget in hora
Et succos pecori et lac subducitur agnis.” Ecl. iii, l. 5.

It only remains to add a few circumstances from the beautiful parable of the good shepherd: “ He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.”^k In this manner, according to Joel, were the ministers of divine vengeance to act: “ They shall run to and fro in the city; they shall run upon the wall; they shall climb upon the houses; they shall enter in at the windows like a thief.”^l To the dishonest practices of eastern shepherds, who do not seem to have been more correct in their

^k John x, 1. ^l Joel ii, 9.

manners than those in less genial climes, Theocritus alludes in these lines :

Αἶγες ἐμαὶ τήνον τον ποιμένα τον Συβαρίταν

Φευγετε τον Λακωνα το μεν νακος εχθες εκλεψεν. *Idyll. lib. v, l. 2.*

“ Fly, my goats, that shepherd Lacon from Sybaris, who yesterday stole my skin.” Lacon returns the compliment, by charging Comatas with stealing his pipe.

The Grecian bard is thus imitated by Virgil in his third Eclogue :

“ Quid domini facient, audent cum talia fures ?

Non ego te vidi Damonis, pessime caprum

Excipere insidiis multum latrante Lycisca ?” *l. 16-18.*

And we learn from various writers, that many herdsmen and shepherds in Egypt, daily practised the crimes of theft and robbery ; which Bochart supposes might be the reason that shepherds were in the times of Joseph, “ an abomination to the Egyptians.”^m The circumstances of our Lord’s parables are commonly borrowed from real life ; and therefore he alludes, not without cause, to those shepherds who lived by rapine and plunder.

It is added in the twelfth verse, “ But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth ; and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth because he is an hireling and careth not for the sheep.” This description applies only to those who, equally indifferent to the voice of duty, and the solicitations of honour, are actuated by a base and mercenary spirit ; for a hired servant may be faithful to his master, not less than a son or a slave born in the house. The patriarch Jacob furnishes an illustrious example of

^m Hieroz. lib. ii, cap. 44, p. 448, 449.

persevering and unshaken fidelity to Laban, although that envious relative changed his wages ten times, and otherwise treated him with great injustice.

From the base character and disgusting conduct of the bad, we turn with satisfaction to the virtuous dispositions, and pleasing exertions of the good shepherd, to whose employment and manners, the sacred writers often allude. Under the name of a shepherd, the Messiah delighted to reveal himself by his servants the prophets, to the ancient church. His fidelity to his Father, and his tender care of his people, are thus described by the pen of Isaiah: "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young."^a The Syrian shepherds were obliged to lead their numerous flocks and herds into the desert, or thinly inhabited country, to pasture. Moses led the flocks of Jethro "to the back side of the desert." The patriarchs wandered with their cattle among the towns and villages of Canaan, and fed them even in the most populous districts without molestation. And it is a remarkable fact, that the Kenites and Rechabites lived in Palestine under tents, and fed their cattle wherever they could find pasture, when the country was crowded with inhabitants long after it had been divided by lot among the tribes. The Bedouin Arabs claim the same privilege in those countries to this day, which, depopulated as they are, probably contain as many inhabitants in their towns and villages, as in the days of Abraham.^o Nor is this custom peculiar to Palestine; in Bar-

^a Isa. xl, 11, 12.

^o Reland. Palest. p. 261. The Bedouins follow the same practice in Syria. Buckingham's Trav. vol. i, p. 97.

bary and other places, they live in the same manner. Great numbers of Arabian shepherds come into Egypt itself, in the months of November, December, and January, from three or four hundred leagues distance, to feed their camels and their horses. After having spent some time in the neighbourhood of the Nile, they retire into the deserts, from whence, by routes with which they are acquainted, they pass into other regions to dwell there, in like manner, some months of the year, till the return of the usual season recalls them to the vale of Egypt.^p To this custom of leading the flocks from one country and region to another, the royal Psalmist alludes in that beautiful pastoral: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness, for his name's sake."^q We are taught by the prophet, to look for the same blessings from the vigilant care and tenderness of Messiah: "They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places. They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them; for he that hath mercy on them, shall lead them; even by the springs of water shall he guide them, And I will make all my mountains a way, and my high ways shall be exalted."^r The conduct of the eastern shepherd in leading his flock to the green pastures, and the still waters, is clearly alluded to by John in the book of Revelation: "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."^s But the character of a good shepherd, is no where delineated

^p Maillet, Let. i, p. 24, 25.

^q Psa. xxiii, 1, 2, 3.

^r Isa. xlix, 9, 10, 11.

^s Rev. vii, 17.

with greater force and beauty, than in a passage of Ezekiel, where Jehovah promises to gather his people from all their dispersions, and plant them in their own land : “ For thus saith the Lord God, Behold I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered ; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel, by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them upon a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be ; there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick ; but I will destroy the fat and the strong ; I will feed them with judgment.”^t In the seventeenth verse, he promises to “ judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he-goats.” To these words of the prophet, our Lord evidently alludes in his sublime description of the last judgment : “ And before him shall be gathered all nations ; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats ; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.”^u

That the shepherd might be able with greater ease and certainty to distinguish his sheep from those belonging to

^t Ezek. xxxiv, 11, &c.

^u Mat. xxv, 32.

other flocks, he set a peculiar mark on some part of their body. To this custom Virgil alludes in his first Georgic :

“ Aut Pecori signum, aut numeros impressit acervis.” 1. 263.

Columella says it was in the month of January that the shepherd marked the full grown lambs, and all other cattle great and small.^v To this practice the Saviour seems to allude in these words; “ I know my sheep,” by the seal of my spirit impressed on their hearts.^w

It is added, “ the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.” In this number, David certainly deserves a place, who repeatedly risked his life in the defence of his father’s property. It is no uncommon thing in the east, for the shepherds to encounter the lion and the bear, and drive them from the fold.^x But, the reference is to a greater than David, or any other eastern shepherd. The dangers they encountered, and the loss they sustained, were nothing to the labours and sufferings of Jesus Christ, who freely laid down his life for the sins of his people, magnifying the law, and satisfying the justice of his Father, in their name.

The shepherds of the east were accountable for the flocks under their charge. Of this fact, the following extract from the Gentoo laws, furnishes a remarkable proof: “ Cattle shall be delivered over to the cow-herd in the morning; the cow-herd shall tend them the whole day with grass and water; and in the evening, shall redeliver them to the master, in the same manner as they were intrusted to him;^y if, by the fault of the cow-herd, any of the cattle be lost or stolen, that cow-herd shall make it good. When

^v De Re Rustica.

^w John x, 27.

^x See Iliad, lib. xii, l. 302–306; and lib. xviii, l. 161.

^y In the very same manner the Italian shepherds tended their flocks. Varro de Re Rust. lib. ii, cap. 10.

a cow-herd has led cattle to any distant place to feed, if any die of some distemper, notwithstanding the cow-herd applied the proper remedy, the cow-herd shall carry the head, the tail, the fore-foot, or some such convincing proof taken from that animal's body, to the owner of the cattle; having done this, he shall be no farther answerable; if he neglects to act thus, he shall make good the loss." In this very situation was Jacob with Laban, his father-in-law, as we learn from his memorable expostulation, addressed to that deceitful and envious relation: "This twenty years," said the angry patriarch, "have I been with thee; thy ewes and thy she-goats have not cast their young; and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten. That which was torn of beasts, I brought not unto thee; I bore the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night."^y By the blessing of God upon his incessant care, the flocks of Laban had not cast their young; so that his stock, which was but very limited, when Jacob arrived, had "increased into a multitude."

The Syrian shepherds were exposed with their flocks, to all the vicissitudes of the seasons. It was indeed impossible to erect buildings capacious enough to receive the countless numbers of cattle, which constituted the wealth of those pastoral princes. Their servants were, therefore, compelled to watch the flocks night and day. The flocks of Libya "often graze both night and day, and for a whole month together, and repair into long deserts, without any shelter, so wide the plain extends."

"Sæpe dum, noctemque, et totum ex ordini mensem

Pascitur, itque pecus longa in deserta sine ullis

Hospitiis: tantum campi jacet."

Vir. 3 Geor. l. 340.^z

^y Gen. xxxi, 41.

^z See also Varro de Re Rustica, lib. ii, cap. 2; and Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, cap. 44, p. 452.

The Mesopotamian shepherd was reduced to the same incessant labour, chilled by the piercing cold of the morning, and scorched by the succeeding heats of a flaming sun, the opposite action of which often swells and chafes his lips and face.^a Jacob complains, “Thus I was; in the day, the drought consumed me, and the frost by night;^b and my sleep departed from mine eyes.”^c In times long posterior to the age when Jacob flourished, the angels who descended to announce the birth of our Lord, found the shepherds to whom they were sent, keeping watch over their flocks by night. To prevent them from wandering, they shut them up in a fold formed of hurdles, and took their station on the outside, to defend them from the attacks of wild beasts, or bands of robbers, that infested the country, and preyed upon the property of the peaceful and industrious inhabitant.^d

When the prophet Ezekiel threatened the Ammonites, that Rabbah, their capital, should become a stable for camels, we are not to imagine that the Arabian shepherds were careful to provide such coverts for these more tender animals. Chardin says, that as they feed them on the ground, and do not litter them, they never think of erecting such buildings for their reception. The same fact is admitted by Dr. Shaw, when he makes a supposition that the cattle of these countries would be much more numerous than they are, if they had some little shelter in winter.^e The only shelter to which they have recourse, is the

^a Morier's Trav. vol. i, p. 54.

^b The traveller has to undergo the same distressing vicissitudes in the depth of an Egyptian winter—“scorched by day and frozen by night.” Buckingham's Travels, vol. i, preface, p. 15.

^c Gen. xxxi, 40.

^d Varro de Re Rust. lib. ii, cap. 10. Horace, Epod. 2.

^e Trav. vol. i, p. 310.

desolate ruin; and to this circumstance the prophet Ezekiel most probably alluded, when he described Rabbah as about to become a stable for camels, or as the original term may be rendered with equal propriety, a place of camels, where they screen themselves from the rays of a burning sun, and feed on the nettles, and other plants, which spring up among the mouldering walls of ruined habitations. The same term is rendered in the twenty-third psalm, pastures; and perhaps all that the prophet means is only this, that Rabbah should be so completely destroyed, that camels should feed on the place where it stood; and if this was his meaning, it has been long since realized, for the last remains of that proud city have entirely disappeared.^f

The greatest skill and vigilance, and even tender care, are required in the management of such immense flocks as wander on the Syrian plains. Their prodigious numbers, compel the keepers to remove them too frequently in search of fresh pastures, which proves very destructive to the young that have not strength to follow.^g This circumstance displays the energy of Jacob's apology to his brother Esau, for not attending him as he requested: "The flocks and herds with young are with me; and if men should over drive them one day, all the flocks would die." It illustrates also another passage in the prophecies of Isaiah: "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young:" a beautiful image, expressing with great force and elegance, the tender and unceasing attention of the shepherd to his flock.

^f Chandler's Trav. p. 130, 131, 151.

^g Harmer's Observ. vol. i, p. 213.

A most important pastoral duty in those regions, is to provide water for the flock.ⁱ The living fountain and the flowing stream, generally furnish a sure and abundant supply ; but these are seldom to be found in the burning desert, where the oriental shepherd is often compelled to feed his cattle. In such circumstances, happy is he who finds a pool where his flocks may quench their thirst. Often as he pursues his journey, a broad expanse of water, clear as crystal, seems to open to his view ; and faint and weary under the fierce sun-beam, he gazes on the unexpected relief with ineffable delight, and fondly anticipates a speedy termination to his present distress. He sees the foremost camels enter the lake, and the water dashed about by their feet. He quickens his pace, and hastens to the spot ; but to his utter disappointment the vision disappears, and nothing remains but the dry and thirsty wilderness.^j To such deceitful appearances, the prophet opposes, with admirable effect, the real pool, the overflowing fountain, and the running stream ; the appropriate symbols of those substantial blessings of grace and mercy, that were laid up in store for the church of Christ in the last days : “ And the parched ground (or the scorching heat) shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water.”^k “ I will

ⁱ Varro de Re Rust. lib. ii, cap. 2.

^j Dr. Clarke's Trav. in Palestine, vol. ii, p. 297. Koran, chap. xxiv, Sale's note. Morier's Trav. vol. i, p. 282. Kinneir's Geographical Memoir, p. 223. Shaw's Trav. vol. ii, p. 323. Humboldt's Personal Narrative, vol. ii, p. 40, and vol. iv, p. 328.—“ In Sanscrit the phenomenon of the Seraub or Mirage is called Mriga-trichna, thirst or desire of the antelope, no doubt because this animal, compelled by thirst (trichna), approaches those barren plains, where, from the inflection of the rays, he thinks he perceives the undulating surface of the waters.” Personal Narrative, vol. ii, p. 554.

^k Isa. xxxv, 7.

open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys ; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.”¹

When the pool, the fountain, and the river fail, the oriental shepherd is reduced to the necessity of digging wells ; and in the patriarchal age, the discovery of water was reckoned of sufficient importance to be the subject of a formal report to the master of the flock, who commonly distinguished the spot by an appropriate name.^m A remarkable instance of this kind is recorded by Moses in these terms : “ And Isaac departed thence, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there. And Isaac digged again the wells of water which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father ; for the Philistines had stopt them after the death of Abraham ; and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them. And Isaac’s servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of springing water. And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac’s herdmen, saying the water is ours ; and he called the name of the well Ezek, because they strove with him. And they digged another well ; and they strove for that also, and he called the name of it Sitnah (opposition) ; and he removed from thence and digged another well : and for that they strove not ; and he called the name of it Rehoboth (room) ; and he said, for now the Lord hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.”ⁿ “ Strife,” says Dr. Richardson, “ between the different villagers and the different herdsmen here, exists still, as it did in the days of Abraham and Lot : the country has often changed masters ; but

¹ Isa. xli, 18.

ⁿ Gen. xxvi, 17.

^m Forbes’s Orient. Mem. vol. i, p. 215.

the habits of the natives, both in this and other respects, have been nearly stationary."^o So important was the successful operation of sinking a well in Canaan, that the sacred historian remarks in another passage: "And it came to pass the same day (that Isaac and Abimelech had concluded their treaty), that Isaac's servants came and told him concerning the well which they had digged, and said unto him, we have found water; and he called it Shebah (the oath), therefore the name of the city is Beershebah unto this day."^p

To prevent the sand, which is raised from the parched surface of the ground by the winds, from filling up their wells, they were obliged to cover them with a stone. In this manner the well was covered, from which the flocks of Laban were commonly watered: and the shepherds, careful not to leave them open at any time, patiently waited till all the flocks were gathered together, before they removed the covering, and then ~~had~~ drawn a sufficient quantity of water, they replaced the stone immediately. The extreme scarcity of water in these arid regions, entirely justifies such vigilant and parsimonious care in the management of this precious fluid; and accounts for the fierce contentions about the possession of a well, which so frequently happened between the shepherds of different masters. But after the question of right, or of possession, was decided, it would seem the shepherds were often detected in fraudulently watering their flocks and herds, from their neighbour's well. To prevent this, they secured the cover with a lock, which continued in use so late as the days of Chardin, who frequently saw such precautions used in different parts of Asia, on account of the

^o Trav. vol. ii, p. 196.

^p Gen. xxvi, 33.

real scarcity of water there.^q According to that intelligent traveller, when the wells and cisterns were not locked up, some person was so far the proprietor, that no one dared to open a well, or a cistern, but in his presence. This was probably the reason, that the shepherds of Padanaram declined the invitation of Jacob to water the flocks, before they were all assembled ; either they had not the key of the lock which secured the stone, or if they had, they durst not open it, but in the presence of Rachel, to whose father the well belonged.

It is ridiculous to suppose, the stone was so heavy, that the united strength of several Mesopotamian shepherds could not roll it from the mouth of the well, when Jacob had strength, or address, to remove it alone ; or, that though a stranger, he ventured to break a standing rule for watering the flocks, which the natives did not dare to do, and that without opposition. The oriental shepherds were not on other occasions so passive ; as the violent conduct of the men of Gerar sufficiently proves.

Twice in the day they led their flocks to the wells ; at noon, and when the sun was going down.^r To water the flocks, was an operation of much labour, and occupied a considerable space of time. It was, therefore, an office of great kindness with which Jacob introduced himself to the notice of his relations, to roll back the stone which lay upon the mouth of the well, and draw water for the flocks which Rachel tended. Some of these wells are furnished with troughs and flights of steps down to the water, and other contrivances, to facilitate the labour of water-

^q Harmer's Observ. vol. i, p. 198.

^r Geor. lib. i, l. 327, &c. Varro, Columella, and Palladius give the same directions.

ing the cattle.^s It is evident the well to which Rebecca went to draw water, near the city of Nahor, had some convenience of this kind; for it is written, “Rebecca hasted and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels.”^t A trough was also placed by the well, from which the daughters of Jethro watered his flocks;^u and if we may judge from circumstances, was a usual contrivance in every part of the east. In modern times, Mr. Park found a trough near the well, from which the Moors watered their cattle, in the sandy deserts of Sahara.^v As the wells are often very deep, from an hundred and sixty to an hundred and seventy feet, the water is drawn up with small leathern buckets, and a cord, which travellers are often obliged to carry along with them, in their journey, because they meet with more cisterns and wells than springs. Dr. Richardson saw one of these buckets lying beside a deep well near a Christian church in Egypt to draw water for the congregation.^w And Buckingham found a party of twelve or fifteen Arabs drawing water in leathern buckets by cords and pulleys.^x To this custom, which they are forced to submit to by the scantiness of the population in those regions, the woman of Samaria refers, in her answer to our Lord: “Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with;” thou hast no bucket and cord, as travellers commonly have, “and the well is deep; from whence then hast thou that living water?”^y

The scarcity of water, and the great labour and expense of digging away so much earth, in order to reach it, ren-

^s Forbes's Orient. Mem. vol. iii, p. 280.

^t Gen. xxiv, 20.

^u Exod. ii, 16.

^v Trav. p. 146.

^w Trav. vol. ii, p. 62.

^x Trav. vol. i, p. 290.

^y John iv, 11.

der a well extremely valuable. As the water is often sold at a very high price, a number of good wells yield to the proprietor a large revenue. Pitts was obliged to purchase water at sixpence a gallon;^z a fact which illustrates the force of the offer made by Moses to Edom; “If I, and my cattle drink of thy water, then will I pay for it.”^a It is properly mentioned as a very aggravating circumstance in the overthrow of Jerusalem, that the ruthless conqueror forced the Jews to purchase with money, the water of their own wells and the wood of their own trees: “We have drunken our water for money; our wood is sold unto us.”^b Even a cup of cold water cannot always be obtained in Syria, without paying a certain price. It is partly on this account our Lord promises, “Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of those little ones, a cup of cold water, in the name of a disciple, should in no wise lose his reward.”^c

To stop the wells, is therefore justly reckoned an act of hostility. The Canaanites, envying the prosperity of Abraham and Isaac, and fearing their power, endeavoured to drive them out of the country, by stopping “up all the wells which their servants had digged, and filling them with earth.”^d The same mode of taking vengeance on enemies, mentioned in this passage, has been practised in more recent times. The Turkish emperors give annually to every Arab tribe near the road, by which the Mahomedan pilgrims travel to Mecca, a certain sum of money, and a certain number of vestments, to keep them from destroying the wells, which lie on that route, and to escort

^z Travels, vol. ii, p. 140. See also Major Rooke's Trav. p. 53.

^a Numb. xx, 19.

^c Matth. x, 42. Mark ix, 1.

^b Lam. v, 4.

^d Gen. xxvi, 15.

the pilgrims across their country.^e D'Herbelot records an incident exactly in point, which seems to be quite common among the Arabs. Gianabi, a famous rebel in the tenth century, gathered a number of people together, seized on Bassorah, and Caufa; and afterwards insulted the reigning caliph, by presenting himself boldly before Bagdat, his capital; after which he retired by little and little, filling up all the pits with sand, which had been dug on the road to Mecca, for the benefit of the pilgrims.^f

Near the fountains and wells, the robber and assassin commonly took his station; and in time of war, the enemy placed their ambush, because the flocks and herds in which the wealth of the country chiefly consisted, were twice every day collected to those places, and might be seized with less danger when the shepherds were busily engaged in drawing water. This circumstance, which must have been familiar to the inhabitants of those countries, is mentioned by Deborah in her triumphal song: "They that are delivered from the noise of archers in the place of the drawing of water, there shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord."^g But a still more perfect comment on these words is furnished by an historian of the croisades, who complains, that during the siege of Jerusalem by the Christian armies, numbers of their men were daily cut off, and their cattle driven away by the Saracens, who lay in ambush for this purpose near all the fountains and watering places.^h

The implements which the oriental shepherds and herdmen used in the management of their flocks, were of various kinds. Several of these are mentioned in the account

^e Niebuhr's Account of Arabia, p. 330, 331.

^f P. 396.

^g Jud. v, 11.

^h Harmer, vol. iii, p. 409.

of David's combat with Goliath, the champion of the Philistines: "And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine."ⁱ

But in order to explain with greater accuracy, the furniture of an oriental shepherd, it may be proper to begin with his vestments. To these the prophet Jeremiah refers, in his prediction of the success which was to crown the arms of Nebuchadnezzar in Egypt: "He shall array himself with the land of Egypt, as a shepherd putteth on his garment;"^j or, as the expression evidently signifies, wraps his body in it with great care, to defend himself from the injuries of the weather. So should that mighty potentate make himself absolute master of Egypt, clothe himself with its spoils, and remunerate himself and his army, for their long and unsuccessful service before Tyre.^k

In the bag or scrip, which is mentioned by Samuel as a part of the shepherd's furniture, his provisions, and other necessaries, are carried. He bears in his hand a staff of considerable length, with which he keeps his cattle in order, and numbers them when they return from the field. To this instrument the Psalmist refers in that beautiful and affecting passage, where he addresses Jehovah as the shepherd of his soul: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."^l The same allusion is involved in the charge of the prophet Micah: "Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine heritage, which dwell solitarily in the

ⁱ 1 Sam. xvii, 40.

Jer. xliii, 12.

^k Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, cap. 44, p. 455, 456.

^l Psa. xxiii, 4.

wood, in the midst of Carmel."^m It was the custom of more accurate or severe masters, to number their flocks in the morning when they went out to pasture, and again in the evening when they returned to the fold.ⁿ But the most indulgent masters seem to have always numbered their flocks in the evening; a fact clearly attested by Virgil in the close of his sixth Eclogue:

“Cogere donec oves stabulis numerumque referre
Jussit, et invito processit vesper Olympo.” l. 85.

“Till vesper warned the shepherds to pen their sheep in the folds, and recount their number; and advanced on the sky, full loth to lose the song.” He states it again as an invariable practice, in the fourth book of the Georgics:

“Consedit scopulo medius, numerumque recenset.” l. 436.

The testimony of Theocritus is still more express,

— τα δε μαλα ποθεισπερα πανι αριθμυνει. *Idyll. viii, l. 16.*

“The whole flocks, however, are always numbered in the evening.” Agreeably to this custom, the prophet Jeremiah is directed by the Spirit of God to promise, “The flocks shall pass again under the hands of him that telleth them, saith the Lord.”^o The reference of these words to the rod of the shepherd numbering his flock, when they return from the pasture, appears from the verse immediately preceding: “Thus saith the Lord of hosts, again in this place, which is desolate, without man and without beast, and in all the cities thereof, shall be an habitation of shepherds, causing their flocks to lie down.”

The ancient people of God were commanded in their law to devote the tenth of their flocks and their herds to the support of religion. The precept runs in these terms:

^m Mic. vii, 14.

ⁿ Virg. Ecl. 3.

^o Jer. xxxiii, 13.

“ And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock ; even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord.”^p In performing this part of their duty, the shepherds of Israel employed the rod ; and to this custom these words of the prophet seem to refer : “ And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant.”^q In this passage the prophet is directed by Jehovah to inform the elders of his people who came to consult him in relation to their future destinies, that he would set aside a tenth part of them for himself, and in fulfilment of the covenant which he made with their fathers, restore them to their own land and establish them for a peculiar people to himself. But the nine parts which remain after the tithing, shall not return from their dispersion, but go and serve the gods of the nations where they please.^r

They also used an ox-goad, by which beeves are habituated or broken to the plough, and managed in the labours of the field. In the book of Judges, it is stated that Shamgar, one of the judges in Israel, used this weapon with terrible effect, against the enemies of his country. The incident is recorded in these terms : “ And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath, which slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox-goad ; and he also delivered Israel.”^s From this fact it is evident, that the ox-goad was a very formidable weapon ; and Maundrell, who saw one that was still used in those parts, declares, it was of such a make and strength, as to be very dangerous in the hand of an exasperated enemy.^t The testimony of Maundrell,

^p Levit. xxvii, 32.

^q Ezek. xx, 37, 38.

^r See Dr. M'Crie's two sermons on the Unity of the Church, p. 61, note.

^s Judg. iii, 31.

^t Trav. p. 110, 111.

is supported by the authority of Homer, who, in the sixth book of the *Iliad*, celebrates the flight and destruction of the Bacchanals, that fell in a bloody affray by the ox-goad of Lycurgus.^u

But besides the rod and the crook, with which the shepherd engaged his enemies in close fight, he was provided with others to annoy them from a distance, among which were the javelin, the bow, and the sling. The use of the javelin and the arrow, is attested by Virgil, in his admirable description of the frantic wanderings of Dido. "Like a wounded deer, whom, heedless of her fate, a shepherd pursuing with his darts, has pierced at a distance among the Cretan woods, and left in the wound the winged steel unknown."^v

"Pastor agens telis, liquitque volatile ferrum

Nescius."

Æn. lib. iv, l. 70.^w

These weapons were in common use among the shepherds of Palestine, in ages long anterior to the time of Virgil; for Isaac directed his son Esau to take his weapons, his quiver and his bow, and go out to the field in quest of some venison.^x When David engaged in single combat with Goliath, "he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag, which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand;"^y and with one of those stones he struck the blaspheming giant on the forehead, through the opening of the helmet, from whence the warrior sur-

^u Line 134.

^v *Æneid.* lib. iv, l. 69. See also his description of the manner in which the African herdsman travels through his native wilds. *Geor.* lib. iii, l. 344.

^w Also *Geor.* lib. iii, l. 342, and *Varro de Re Rust.* lib. ii, cap. 10.

^x *Gen.* xxvii, 3.

^y *1 Sam.* xvii, 40.

veyed his antagonist, the only aperture in that piece of armour. "So David prevailed over the Philistine, with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David." In this daring action, the strength and dexterity of the strippling shepherd were eminently displayed; but still more the mighty arm and directing hand of Jehovah, who inspired the youthful breast with undaunted courage, nerved his arm, imparted more than mortal skill in taking his aim, and crowned his perilous attempt with a success equally great and unexpected. Such were the accoutrements of the Arabian shepherds from the remotest antiquity; accoutrements imposed upon them by the necessity of their circumstances, and which they often employed against their enemies with terrible effect.

But too frequently have they turned them against the unoffending passenger, whom they stripped and wounded and left half dead. To such a scene of rapine and blood the beautiful parable of the good Samaritan alludes.^y It is thus illustrated by a recent traveller who "went down from Jerusalem to Jericho," under the protection of a tribe of Arabian shepherds, and the conduct of two of their number. "After going through the pass, we descended again into deeper valleys, travelling sometimes on the edges of cliffs and precipices, which threatened destruction on the slightest false step. The scenery all around us was grand and awful, notwithstanding the forbidding aspect of the barren rocks that every where met our view; but it was that sort of grandeur which excited fear and terror, rather than admiration."

"The whole of this road from Jerusalem to the Jor-

^y Luke x, 30-35.

dan, is held to be the most dangerous about Palestine, and, indeed, in this portion of it, the very aspect of the scenery is sufficient, on the one hand, to tempt to robbery and murder, and on the other, to occasion a dread of it on those who pass that way. It was partly to prevent any accident happening to us in this early stage of our journey, and partly, perhaps, to calm our fears on that score, that a messenger had been dispatched by our guides to an encampment of their tribe near, desiring them to send an escort to meet us at this place. We were met here accordingly, by a band of about twenty persons on foot, all armed with matchlocks, and presenting the most ferocious and robber-like appearance that could be imagined. The effect of this was heightened by the shouts which they sent forth from hill to hill, and which were re-echoed through all the valleys, while the bold projecting crags of rock, the dark shadows in which every thing lay buried below, the towering height of the cliffs above, and the forbidding desolation which every where reigned around, presented a picture that was quite in harmony throughout all its parts."

"It made us feel most forcibly, the propriety of its being chosen as the scene of the delightful tale of compassion which we had before so often admired for its doctrine, independently of its local beauty."

"One must be amid these wild and gloomy solitudes, surrounded by an armed band, and feel the impatience of the traveller who rushes on to catch a new view at every pass and turn; one must be alarmed at the very tramp of the horses' hoofs rebounding through the caverned rocks, and at the savage shouts of the footmen, scarcely less loud than the echoing thunder produced by the discharge

of their pieces in the valleys: One must witness all this upon the spot, before the full force and beauty of the admirable story of the good Samaritan can be perceived. Here, pillage, wounds, death would be accompanied with double terror, from the frightful aspect of every thing around. Here, the unfeeling act of passing by a fellow-creature in distress, as the Priest and Levite are said to have done, strikes one with horror, as an act almost more than inhuman. And here, too, the compassion of the good Samaritan is doubly virtuous, from the purity of the motive which must have led to it, in a spot where no eyes were fixed on him to draw forth the performance of any duty, and from the bravery which were necessary to admit of a man's exposing himself by such delay, to the risk of a similar fate to that from which he was endeavouring to rescue his fellow-creature."^z

As soon as the morning dawned, the shepherds led their flocks to the pasture, and tended them with solicitous care till the fourth hour of the day or ten in the morning, according to our mode of dividing time, when they conducted them to the quiet waters, the shade and noonday repose. This done, they led them again to the water and then tended them till the evening, and the setting of the sun.^a To this method of tending the flocks, the sacred writers sometimes allude: "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon."^c "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters;"^d where about

^z Buckingham's Trav. vol. ii, p. 55-57.

^a Varro de Re Rust. lib. ii, c. 2. Columella de Re Rust. lib. viii, c. 3.

^b Geor. iii, l. 327-337.

^c Song i, 7.

^d Ps. xxiii, 1, 2.

mid-day the flocks repose under the projecting rock, or the spreading tree. Another allusion occurs in the prophecies of Isaiah: "They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them."^e "I will feed them," said Ezekiel, "I will feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country."^f But their care and labour were not then over; all night long they were obliged to watch them, as has been already observed, prepared alike to repel the assault of the robber or the wild beast. Jacob complains to Laban, that the heat by day, and the frost by night, consumed him, and his sleep departed from his eyes; and the shepherds, to whom the angels appeared at the birth of Christ, "were in the field keeping watch over their flocks by night." The dangers to which they were exposed in the wilderness, may be learned from the history of Job, whose servants were slain, and his cattle driven away by three bands of Chaldean freebooters. Such predatory expeditions, it is probable, were by no means unfrequent. Nor were they safe from the furious attacks of ravenous beasts, that approached the fold, and often, in spite of all their vigilance and exertions, broke into the enclosure, and carried off a part of their charge.^b When David kept his father's sheep, he had to encounter both a lion and a bear, which he vanquished, and rescued the prey from their devouring jaws.

"Sheep," says Ælian, "are obedient beyond all other

^e Chap. xlix, 10.

^f Chap. xxxiv, 13, 14.

^g Iliad, lib. xi, l. 185.

animals, and formed by nature to submit. They obey the shepherds, and the dogs, and even follow the goats.”^h

The oriental shepherd marches before his flock to the field, with his rod in his hand and his dog by his side; and they are so perfectly disciplined, that they follow him wherever he chooses to lead them. To facilitate the management of his charge, he gives names to his sheep, which answer to them, as dogs and horses answer to theirs in these parts of the world. The shepherds of Egypt select a ram to lead the flock, and suspend a bell from his neck that they may follow him with greater ease and certainty.ⁱ

In Homer, a name was given only to a leader of the males, which was trained, when the shepherd called him by his name, to go before them.^j But in succeeding times names were given to both the males and females of the flock, although the practice of preparing the boldest and stateliest ram to lead them might continue. In a Greek pastoral, the shepherd Daphnis spake to the she-goats and addressed the he-goats by name. And in another part of the same poem, he called some of them out of the flock by their names:^k

— τὰς αἰγὰς προσεῖπε καὶ τὰς τραγὰς ἐκαλῆσεν ὀνόμασι

Ὅδε Δαφνίς ἐκαλῆσε τινὰς αὐτῶν ὀνόμασι.

Theocritus mentions the names by which he addressed some of his flock :

^h De Nat. Animal. lib. vii, cap. 27. See also Artemidorus Oneirocr. xi, 12. Προβάλα ἀνδρωποῖς εἰκασί, δια το πειθεσθαι τῷ ποιμένι καὶ συναυλιζέσθαι.

ⁱ Richardson's Trav. vol. ii, p. 197. Aristotle mentions the same custom in his History, book vi, chap. 19. ^j Iliad, lib. iii.

^k Longus Pastoral. lib. iv, p. 136, 147, quoted by Lampe in his work on John, vol. ii, p. 623.

Οὐκ ἀπο τὰς δρυὸς ἔτος ὁ Κοναρος ἄτε Κυναῖθα
Τῆτεῖ βοσκησισθε ποτ ἀνῆλας, ὡς ὁ φαλαρος.

“Wilt thou not leave the oak, Conarus, and thou Cynætha: Will ye not feed here towards the rising sun like Phalarus?”^g Here Conarus and Phalarus are the names of he-goats, Cynætha the name of a she-goat. The flocks in the island of Cynnon ran off when a stranger approached them; but when the shepherd blew his horn, they immediately recognized the sound, and scampered towards the spot from whence it came.^h In Syria and Palestine, the sheep distinguish the voice of their keeper from that of a stranger, and follow his call with the same readiness as the flocks of Cynnon the horn of their shepherds.ⁱ These curious customs, our Lord beautifully applies to his own management, as the great shepherd of his church: “the sheep hear his voice; and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his sheep, he goeth before them; and the sheep follow him; for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers.”^j

The shepherds in those, as in other pastoral regions, frequently devoted a part of their leisure hours to the study and practice of music. With the pipe or the harp, they endeavoured to beguile the listless hours of the noon day; or, while they guarded the slumbering fold, the

^g Idyll. v, l. 102, 103.

^h Polybius, lib. xii.

Virgil clearly alludes to this fact:

“Parcete oves nimium procedere: non ripæ
Creditur.”

Eclogue iii, 94.

“Ite domum, saturæ, venit Hesperus, ite capellæ.” Ecl. x, 77.

John x, 5.

lonely watches of the night. The son of Jesse, was, at an early period of life, renowned among the shepherds of Palestine for his exquisite skill in touching the harp. His superior abilities as a musician, procured him the dangerous honour of standing in the presence of Saul, and soothing his agitated mind into peace and comfort, with the ravishing tones of his favourite instrument. But his musical talents were often devoted to a nobler purpose, than allaying the distraction of a gloomy despot, or beguiling the lingering hours in the lonely wilderness ; they were employed in setting to music the inimitable lyrics, which, under the direction of the divine spirit, he composed for the worship of his God, and in performing the sweet and solemn airs upon the harp. He invented several kinds of musical instruments, and improved others ; but the instrument in which he seems to have chiefly delighted, was the harp with ten strings ; of which number, it is probable, several were added by himself. It is a curious fact, that the Greek writers refer the invention of music to shepherds. Apollo, the inventor of the harp, according to some, tended for nine years the flocks of Admetus ; Pan, another shepherd, invented the lyre, and Mercury, the pipe ; both of whom, were in succeeding ages, adored as the deities who presided over pastoral affairs. In times long posterior to the age in which they flourished, the shepherds of the east were still renowned for their taste in poetry and music ; of which, the Idylls of Theocritus, and the Eclogues of Virgil, are permanent and incontestible proofs.^k The pipe with six holes was more especially consecrated by the heathen to the service of their gods. On this instrument they played before the images

^k Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, cap. 44, p. 461-465.

of their deities.¹ To this idolatrous practice the prophet seems to refer: "And the harp and the viol, and the tabret and pipe, and wine are in their feasts."^m All those instruments were probably used in the same unholy worship.

The oriental shepherd and his family sometimes take up their abode in caves, with which the country, particularly about Askelon, abounds. These caverns are often so capacious, as to admit the master and his whole property. In times of imminent danger, the people forsake their towns and villages, and retire with their wives and children, their flocks and herds, into these dark recesses, which have been from time immemorial, the refuge of the oppressed. It was in these hiding places, that Baldwin I. king of Jerusalem, in the barbarous age of the crusades, found the inhabitants of many villages, with their flocks and their herds, who had favoured the cause of his enemies, and fled at his approach.ⁿ In Egypt such excavations appear to have been the settled abodes of a numerous and peaceful population. Dr. Richardson entered several mountain defiles on his way to Nubia, where he found "a number of excavations extremely well executed, covered with sculpture, and painted in the most brilliant colours; likewise a number of pits sunk perpendicularly into the rock, all of which have been used as burying places, and many of them still contain handsome mummy cases, made of wood and stone, beautifully painted in a variety of colours, and covered with curious devices." But besides these, "high up in the front, along the base of the mountain, and over the rocky flat, all the way from Medina Thabou, there are innumerable excavations,

¹ Ovid. *Fast.* i, l. 11, and vi, l. 652.

^m Isa. v, 12. Blunt, p. 21, 444.

ⁿ Harmer's *Obs.* vol. i, p. 181.

many of them large and beautifully formed, painted, and sculptured with many curious devices, illustrative of ancient customs. In one place above Medina Thabu, the doors into these excavations are so numerous and so contiguous, that they resemble a row of houses in a village. They have a long piazza in front, and a large apartment within; and a long shaft running back into the rock. They rise in tiers above each other, according to the different elevations of the mountain. They have evidently been dwelling houses, and, from the shady piazza in front, the spectator enjoys the most delightful view that can possibly be obtained of the plain of Thebes."^o In Hindostan, too, the fainting inhabitants are forced to escape from the severe fervours of an eastern noon, into vast artificial caverns and into grottoes of the most refreshing coolness, which the great and the wealthy cause to be constructed in their gardens.^p

The Egyptian shepherds lived in booths constructed of reeds which lined the margin of their venerated river.^q But the most common abode of the Syrian shepherd, is the tent. From the permanency of their customs, it is reasonable to suppose, that it was made in the same manner as the common Arab tents, which have only a pole or two to support them in the middle, and a single covering of black hair-cloth, which, though mean and coarse, effectually repels the rain and the dew.^r These, the Arabians call

^o Richardson's Trav. vol. ii, p. 64, 65. See another account of the excavations near Thebes, p. 73, 74. See also Diodorus Sicul. lib. i, p. 43, and Strabo, lib. xvii, p. 816.

^p Maurice's Indian Antiq. vol. i, p. 59, 73.

^q Diodorus Sicul. lib. i, cap. 43.

^r Volney's Trav. vol. i, p. 279. They are of the same colours in Persia. Kinneir's Geog. Mem. &c. p. 139. See also Niebuhr's Travels in Ara-

kymas, from *kama*, he pitched a tent, because of the shelter they afford; and *beet el shaar*, houses of hair, from the materials, or webs of goats' hair, of which they are made. They are the same which the ancients called *mapalia*:

“*Qualia Maurus amat dispersa mapalia Pastor.*”

To the colour of these tents, the spouse thus alludes: “I am black, but comely, like the tents of Kedar.”^s

The Arabian tents are of an oblong figure, supported, according to their size, some with one pillar, others with two or three, whilst a curtain or carpet, occasionally let down from each of these divisions, turns the whole into so many separate apartments. These tents are kept firm and steady, by bracing, or stretching down their eves with cords, tied to hooked wooden pins, well pointed, which they drive into the ground with a mallet; one of these pins answering to the nail, as the mallet does to the hammer, which Jael used in fastening to the ground the temples of Sisera.^t In these homely dwellings, the Arabian shepherds and their families, wrapping themselves up in their hykes, repose upon the bare ground, or with only a mat or carpet beneath them, wherever they can find a place unoccupied. Those indeed, who are married, have each of them a portion of the tent to themselves, separated by a curtain; and in remote times, women of distinction had a tent for their own use.^u Curtains curiously adorned by the women with needle work are suspended over the doors of the tents occupied by their chiefs and princes. This may perhaps account for the superior style in which the

bia, vol. i, p. 209; Dr. Richardson's Trav. vol. ii, p. 195; and Buckingham's Trav. vol. ii, p. 52. Sometimes the hair-cloth is striped black and white, and often brown.

^s Song i, 5.

Judg. iv, 21.

^u Shaw's Trav. vol. i, p. 398, 399.

hanging for the door of the tabernacle was finished :
 “ And thou shalt make an hanging for the door of the tent, of blue, and purple and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needle work.”^v It was the habitation of the God and king of Israel.

Besides the mats and coverlids of the common Arab tents, La Roque mentions several domestic utensils, among which, are hair sacks, and trunks, and baskets, covered with skin, in which they packed their kettles or pots, great wooden bowls, hand mills, and pitchers.^w These are all the articles of household furniture they commonly need, or desire. This account seems to explain, in a clearer manner than commentators have done, the passages where the furniture which the people of Israel used in the wilderness, is described : “ Upon whatsoever any of them, when they are dead, doth fall, it shall be unclean ; whether it be any vessel of wood,” that is, their wooden bowls, “ or raiment, or skin,” which was used in covering their trunks or baskets, “ or sack,” made of hair-cloth, for any domestic purpose : “ whatsoever vessel it be, wherein any work is done, it must be put into water, and it shall be unclean until the evening ; so it shall be cleansed. And every earthen vessel, (or pitcher, for holding liquids, and drinking out of) whereinto any of them falls, whatever is in it shall be unclean, and ye shall break it.”^y

But, although the bowls and dishes of the vulgar Arabs are of wood, those belonging to their chiefs are not unfrequently of copper, neatly tinned.^y Mr. Harmer supposes, that the vessel in which Jael, the wife of Heber,

^v Exod. xxvi, 36. Morier's Trav. vol. i, p. 250.

^w Voy. dans la Palest. p. 176, 178.

^x Lev. xi, 32.

^y Voy. dans la Palest. p. 178. Niebuhr's Arabia, vol. i, p. 209.

presented the butter-milk to Sisera, which Deborah, in her song, calls a lordly dish, or, literally, a dish of nobles, was of this sort. Her husband certainly was an Arabian emir or chieftain, of great distinction, in whose tents we might expect to find vessels of a superior kind; the working of metals dates its commencement long before her time; and the mere size of the vessel could hardly be the thing intended, for it does not appear that the chieftain of the east drank out of larger vessels than the meanest of his retinue. But it is more probable, that Jael's lordly dish was a large bason of wood, which, even in modern times, is often presented on the table of Arabian emirs, and accords better with that simple mode of living for which the Kenites were so distinguished. It was quite natural to present such a bason of milk to the exhausted fugitive; and besides, we learn from the conduct of Joseph to his brother Benjamin, that a large portion was given as a mark of love and respect; which the wife of Heber certainly pretended to feel for Sisera on that occasion.^y

The bottle is another necessary utensil in the tent of an Arabian shepherd. It holds their water and other liquids, and is frequently used as a pitcher.^z The eastern bottle is made of a goat or kid skin, stripped off, without opening the belly; the apertures made by cutting off the tail and legs are sewed up, and when filled, it is tied about the neck.^a The Arabs and Persians never go a journey without a small leathern bottle of water hanging by their side like a scrip.^b These skin bottles preserve their water, milk, and

^y Harmer's Observ. vol. i, p. 216, 217.

^z Forbes's Orient. Mem. vol. ii, p. 140. ^a Harmer's Obs. vol. i, p. 219.

^b Buckingham in his journey from Jerusalem carried a leathern bottle of water suspended from his saddle, and all his party were equipped in the same manner. Trav. vol. ii, p. 51.

other liquids, in a fresher state than any other vessels they can use. The people of the east, indeed, put into them every thing they mean to carry to a distance, whether dry or liquid, and very rarely make use of boxes and pots, unless to preserve such things as are liable to be broken.^c They inclose these leathern bottles in woollen sacks, because their beasts of carriage often fall down under their load, or cast it down on the sandy desert. This method of transporting the necessaries of life has another advantage; the skin bottles preserve them fresher; defend them against the ants, and other insects, which cannot penetrate the skin; and prevent the dust, of which immense quantities are constantly moving about, in the arid regions of Asia, and so fine, that no coffer is impenetrable to it, from reaching them. It is for these reasons, that provisions of every kind are enclosed in vessels made of the skins of these animals. The conjecture therefore, is highly probable, that not only the balm and the honey, which are somewhat liquid, but also the nuts and almonds, which were sent as a present to Joseph from Canaan, were inclosed in little vessels of kid skin, that they might be preserved fresh; and to defend them against injuries, from the restiveness of the camels or asses, or other accidents, the whole were inclosed in woollen sacks. This custom has descended to the present times; for fruits and provisions of every kind are still commonly packed up in skins, by the inhabitants of Syria.^d

These skin bottles were not confined to the countries of Asia; the roving tribes, which passed the Hellespont soon after the deluge, and settled in Greece and Italy, probably introduced them into these countries. We learn

^c Niebuhr's Arabia, vol. i, p. 209. See also Odyssey, lib. ii, l. 380.

^d Harmer's Observ. vol. i, p. 221, note by Dr. Clarke.

from Homer, that they were in common use among the Greeks at the siege of Troy; for, with a view to an accommodation between the hostile armies, the heralds carried through the city the things which were necessary to ratify the compact, two lambs, and exhilarating wine, the fruit of the earth, in a bottle of goat skin:

Ἄρνι δῶω καὶ οἶνον εὐφρονα, καρπὸν ἀγροῦ

Ἀσπὼ ἐν αἰγείῳ.

Il. lib. iii, l. 246.^d

At the feast of Bacchus, it was the custom of the Romans to dance upon bottles of goat skin, blown up like bladders, and besmeared with oil, which were placed in the fields for that purpose:

——— “atque inter pocula læti

Molibus in pratis unctos saliere per utres.” *Vir. 2 Geor. l. 383.*

To those goat-skin vessels, the Psalmist refers in this complaint: “I am become as a bottle in the smoke.”^e My appearance in the state of my exile, is as different from what it was when I dwelt at court, as are the gold and silver vessels of a palace, from the smoky skin bottle of a poor Arab’s tent, where I am now compelled to reside. Not less emphatical is the lamentation of the prophet, that the precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, or to vessels fabricated of that precious metal, were considered as no better than earthen pitchers, the work of the potter.

The holy Psalmist compares himself to a bottle in the smoke; which is a convertible phrase with a bottle in the tent of an Arab; because, when fires are lighted in it, the smoke instantly fills every part, and greatly incommodes the tenant. Nor will this appear surprising, when it is considered that an Arabian tent has no aperture but the door, from which the smoke can escape. The inspired

^d *Odyssey, lib. vi, l. 77, 78.*

^e *Psa. cxix, 83.*

writer, therefore, seems to allude both to the meanness of a skin bottle, and to its blackness, from the smoke of the tent in which it is placed. And a most natural image it was for him to use, driven from the vessels of silver and gold in the palace of Saul, to quench his thirst with the wandering Arabs, from a smutted bottle of goat skin.^f

These bottles are liable to be rent, when old or much used, and at the same time capable of being repaired. In the book of Joshua we are informed, the Gibeonites “took wine bottles, old and rent, and bound up.”^g This is perfectly according to the custom of the east; and the manner in which they mend their old and rent bottles is various. Sometimes they set in a piece; sometimes they gather up the wounded place in the manner of a purse; sometimes they put in a round flat piece of wood, and by that means stop the hole.^h

The shepherds are not the only class of people that live in tents; many orientals forsake their villages at the approach of summer, for the more airy and refreshing shelter which they afford. This custom, which may be traced to an antiquity very remote, explains, in the most satisfactory manner, an incident in the history of Jacob. When the patriarch, in consequence of a divine admonition, had formed the resolution to return from Mesopotamia to his father's house, he sent for Rachel and Leah to his flocks, and there informed them of his design; and on their consenting to go with him, he set out upon his journey, so silently, that Laban had no notice of it till the third day after his departure. It appears, however, that he carried all his effects with him, and tents for the accom-

^f Harmer's Observ. vol. i, p. 221.

^g Josh. ix, 4.

^h Chardin's MS. vol. vi.

modation of his family ; and that Laban, who pursued him, had tents also for the use of his followers. The reason is, it was the time of sheep-shearing, when the masters and all their retainers commonly lived under tents in the open fields ; and had the greater part, if not the whole of their furniture with them, on account of the entertainments which were given on these joyful occasions. Thus was Jacob equipped at once for his journey, and Laban for the pursuit. It is not more difficult to account for the intelligence not reaching Laban till the third day after Jacob's escape. Laban's flocks were in two divisions—one under the care of Jacob ; the other committed to the care of Laban's sons, at the distance of three days' journey ; and Jacob's own flock, under the management of his family, were, probably for the same reason, at an equal distance. Beside this, there might be other circumstances which retarded the progress of the messenger, which the sacred historian did not think it necessary to state ; the fact is certain, and all the incidents of the story are natural and easy.

The custom of living in tents, was not confined to people in the country ; persons of distinction often retired from the towns into the fields, and lived under tents during the heats of summer. Tahmasp, a Persian monarch, used to spend the winter at Casbin ; and to retire in the summer, three or four leagues into the country, where he lived in tents at the foot of mount Alouvent, a place famed for its cool and pleasant retreats.^h His successors acted in the same manner, till the time of Abbas the Great, who removed his court to Ispahan.

Entertainments are frequently given in the country

^h Harmer's Observ. vol. i, p. 219.

under tents, which, by the variety of their colours, and the peculiar manner in which they are sometimes pitched, make a very pleasant appearance. To this agreeable custom, the spouse probably alludes, in that description of her person : “ I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem ; as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.”ⁱ The seeming contradiction in the first clause, is easily obviated. The Arabs generally make use of tents covered with black hair-cloth ; the other nations around them live in booths, or huts, constructed of reeds and boughs, or other materials, or in tents of different colours. In Palestine, the Turcomans live in tents of white linen cloth ; while the Turks in their encampments, prefer green or red, which have a very pleasing effect in the eye of the traveller.”^j It is only the Arabian tents, or the tents of Kedar, which are uniformly black or striped. This is the reason the spouse compares herself, not to tents in general, which are of different colours, but to those of Kedar, which are all covered with black hair-cloth, and have therefore a disagreeable appearance. These tents are stretched on three or four pickets, only five or six feet high, which gives them a very flat appearance : at a distance, one of these camps seems only like a number of black spots.^k

To be black, but comely, involves no contradiction ; for it is certain that the face may be discoloured by the sun, to the influence of which the spouse positively ascribes her sable hue, and yet possess an exquisite gracefulness. The Arab women whom Mr. Wood saw among

ⁱ Song i, 5.

^j D’Arvieux *Voy. dans la Palest.* p. 99, 100, 173. Pococke’s *Trav.* vol. ii, p. 115, 146. Chardin’s *Trav.* p. 382. Harmer’s *Observ.* vol. i, p. 236, 237.

^k Volney’s *Trav.* vol. i, p. 279.

the ruins of Palmyra, were well shaped ; and, although very swarthy, yet had good features. Zenobia, the celebrated queen of that renowned city, was reckoned eminently beautiful ; and the description we have of her person, answers to that character ; her complexion of a dark brown (the necessary effect of her way of life in that burning climate)—her eyes black and sparkling, and of an uncommon fire—her countenance animated and sprightly in a very high degree—her person graceful and genteel beyond imagination—her teeth white as pearl—her voice clear and strong.¹ Such is the picture which historians have drawn of the beautiful and unfortunate Zenobia ; from whence it appears, that a person may be both black and comely ; and by consequence, that the description of Solomon, which certainly refers to the moral and religious state and character of the genuine worshipper of Jehovah, is neither incongruous nor exaggerated, but perfectly agreeable to nature.

In this case, however, the duskiness of complexion was not natural, but the consequence of exposure to the rays of the sun ; for the spouse anticipates the surprise which the daughters of Jerusalem would feel when they beheld her countenance : “ Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me.” Females of distinction in Palestine, and even in Mesopotamia, are not only beautiful and well-shaped, but in consequence of being always kept from the rays of the sun, are very fair. This fact is attested by D’Arvieux, who was favoured with a sight of several Arabian ladies of high rank.^m It is not unworthy of notice, that the Scripture bears the

¹ Ruins of Palmyra, p. 37.

^m Voy. dans la Palest. p. 214 ; and Russel’s Hist. vol. i, p. 99.

same testimony concerning the complexion of Sarah, of Rebecca, and of Rachel; they were "beautiful and well-favoured." But the women in general are extremely brown and swarthy in the complexion; although there are not a few of exquisite beauty in these torrid regions, especially among those who are less exposed to the heat of the sun. It is on this account, that the prophet Jeremiah, when he would describe a beautiful women, represents her as one that keeps at home: because those who are desirous to preserve their beauty, go very little abroad.

The spouse proceeds, "As the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon." By the last clause may be understood those splendid tents, to which that great monarch, who, by his own confession, denied himself no earthly pleasure, retired in the heats of summer, or when he wished to entertain his nobles and courtiers, or sought the amusement of the chase. Some are of opinion, these curtains refer to the sumptuous hangings which surrounded the bed of the Israelitish king: and their idea receives some countenance from a manuscript note of Dr. Russel's, which states, that Moschetto curtains are sometimes suspended over the beds in Syria and Palestine.^o But, since it is common in Hebrew poetry to express nearly the same thought in the second parallel line as in the first; and since it is equally common in Scripture to put a part for the whole, —it is more natural to suppose, that the tents of Solomon are actually meant in this passage; and as we are sure they were extremely magnificent, they might with great propriety be introduced here, on account of their beauty.

The oriental shepherds, when unprovided with tents,

^o Russel's Hist. vol. i, p. 144. Harmer's Observ. vol. i, p. 238, note by Dr. Clarke.

erect huts or booths of loose stones, covered with reeds and boughs. Pococke found, in the neighbourhood of Acre, some open huts, made of boughs raised about three feet from the ground, inhabited by Arabs.^p In such booths, many of the people of Israel were obliged to take shelter in the wilderness, from the want of a sufficient number of tents; the remembrance of which they were commanded to preserve by a solemn festival. But even these meaner and more inconvenient habitations, are not always within the reach of an Arabian shepherd; he is often obliged to take refuge under the projecting rock, and to sleep in the open air. A grove or woodland occasionally furnishes a most agreeable retreat. The description which Chandler has left us of one of these stations, is so strikingly picturesque, that it must be given in his own words. "About two in the morning, our whole attention was fixed by the barking of dogs, which, as we advanced, became exceedingly furious. Deceived by the light of the moon, we now fancied we could see a village; and were much mortified to find only a station of poor goat-herds, without even a shed, and nothing for our horses to eat. They were lying, wrapped in their thick capots or loose coats, by some glimmering embers, among the bushes in a dale, under a spreading tree by the fold. They received us hospitably, heaping on fresh fuel, and producing sour curds and coarse bread, which they toasted for us on the coals. We made a scanty meal, sitting on the ground, lighted by the fire and by the moon; after which, sleep suddenly overpowered me. On waking, I found my two companions by my side, sharing in the comfortable cover of the janizary's cloak, which he had carefully spread over

^p Trav. vol. ii, p. 158.

us. I was now much struck with the wild appearance of the spot. The tree was hung with rustic utensils; the she-goats in a pen, sneezed, and bleated, and rustled to and fro; the shrubs, by which our horses stood, were leafless, and the earth bare; a black cauldron with milk, was simmering over the fire; and a figure, more than ghaunt or savage, close by us, struggling on the ground with a kid, whose ears he had slit, and was endeavouring to cauterize with a red hot iron." This description forms a striking comment on a passage in Ezekiel, in which God condescends to give this promise to his people: "I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land; and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods."^a No reasonable doubt can be entertained that they were often exposed in the same manner, while tending their flocks; and in great danger, when their country, from the thinness of the population or other causes, happened to be overrun with beasts of prey. They are, accordingly, cheered with the sure prospect of those ravenous animals being exterminated, and every woodland becoming a place of safety to the slumbering shepherd.

In the time of Chandler, it was still the custom of eastern shepherds to sit at the door of their tents in the heat of the day. That traveller, "at ten minutes after ten in the morning," was entertained with the view of a plain full of booths, with the Turcomans sitting by their doors, under sheds resembling porticoes, or by shady trees, surrounded with flocks of goats.^r In the same situation the three angels found Abraham, when they came to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, sitting under the portico, or skirts

^a Ezek. xxxiv, 25. Chandler's Trav. p. 157. ^r Ibid. p. 180, 181.

of his tent, near the door, to enjoy the refreshing breeze, and superintend his servants. It was not the hottest part of the day, when Chandler saw the Turcoman shepherds sitting at the doors of their booths; it was soon after ten in the morning; and when Abraham was sitting at his tent door, it might be nearly at the same hour. In the hottest part of the day, according to the practice of those countries, the patriarch had been retired to rest.

The goats of the Turcomans were feeding around their huts; and if Abraham's cattle, which is extremely probable, were feeding around his tent in the same manner, it accounts for the expedition with which he ran and fetched a calf from the herd, in order to entertain his visitants.

In winter, the Arabians and their cattle lodge together; on this account they encamp in valleys, or on the sea shore upon the sand, in order to avoid the inconvenience of mire: but the emirs, or princes, live in a very different way; they have always two tents, one for themselves, and the other for their wives, besides a number of small ones for their domestics, together with a tent of audience.^s In the same style of rustic magnificence, the patriarchs seem to have lived; for Abraham and Sarah occupied separate tents, as did Isaac and Rebecca; and from them, it is probable, the custom descended to the Arabian shepherds of modern times.

In summer, the flocks were enclosed in folds, to which allusion is frequently made in the sacred volume. The fold of Polyphemus, the far-famed Sicilian shepherd, was a spacious cave, where his cattle, his sheep, and goats reposed.^t In Persia the shepherds frequently drive their flocks into caverns at night, and enclose them by heaping

^s D'Arvieux Voy. dans la Palest. p. 175.

^t Odyss. lib. ix, l. 185.

up walls of loose stones.^u But the more common sheep-fold was an enclosure in the manner of a building, and constructed of stone and hurdles, or fenced with reeds.^v It had a large door, or entrance, for admitting the flock, which was closed with hurdles; and to facilitate the tithing, which was done in the fold, they struck out a little door, so small, that two lambs could not escape together. To this entrance, which is still used in the east, our Lord alludes in this declaration: "He that entereth not by the door into the sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber."^w

To remove the impurities which the wool might have contracted in the course of the year in the sandy deserts, it was the custom in those countries, as in our own, to wash their flocks in the standing pool or flowing stream. But in what manner they accomplished this necessary operation, whether by the hand of the shepherd, or by leaping the sheep from the brow of a rock into the pool below, does not certainly appear. The direction of Virgil to the shepherds of Italy, seems to favour the last method:

"Dulcibus idcirco fluviiis pecus omne magistri," &c.

Geor. iii, l. 445.

On this account, the shepherds drench the whole flock in sweet rivers, and the ram, with humid fleece, is plunged in the pool, and sent to float along the stream.

Sheep-washing is only once mentioned in Scripture; the passage occurs in the Song of Solomon, and is thus translated: "Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which come up from the washing."^x The

^u Morier's Trav. vol. i, p. 61.

^w John x, 1.

^v Varro de Re Rust. lib. ii, c. 2.

^x Ch. iv, 2.

embrowned fleece is taken off; every speck of impurity is washed away in the flowing stream; the flock, shining in the purest white,^y go up from the pool, as their custom is, in a line; from these circumstances, the royal preacher borrows the beautiful comparison in this passage; and it is scarcely possible to conceive one more striking and appropriate, to describe the teeth, at once so ornamental to the mouth, and so beneficial in the work of nutrition, clean as the fleece which has been washed in the running stream; “white as the colour of the purest wool; none rising higher than the other; none standing unduly prominent beyond another; but all set as true as if they were ranged by the compass; and making as regular an appearance as the flocks that are even shorn.”^z It places before us, with equal force and propriety, the spiritual meaning of the text; for whether we apply it, with the Chaldee paraphrast, to the ministers of religion, who, under the former economy, fed upon the sacrifices, as the representatives of the people, or who, since the coming of Christ, are engaged in teaching them, and conducting the affairs of the church; or, with the Christian expositor, to the graces of the Holy Spirit, and their corresponding exercises in the genuine believer,—it gives us a most vivid idea of the immaculate purity and perfect regularity, which ought to adorn the character and actions of the minister or the private Christian.

Sheep-shearing is an operation to which allusion is more frequently made in the sacred volume. The wool in very remote times was not shorn with an iron instrument, but plucked off with the hand.^a From the concurrent testi-

^y Virgil. ^z Hervey's *Theron and Aspasio*, vol. ii, p. 385, note.

^a Varro de *Lingua Latina*, lib. iv. De *Re Rustica*, lib. ii, cap. 11. And the custom of plucking off the fleece continued till the age of Varro, who

mony of several writers, the time when it is performed in Palestine, falls in the month of March. If this be admitted, it fixes the time of the year when Jacob departed from Laban on his return to his father's house, for he left him at the time he went to shear his sheep. In like manner, the sheep of Nabal were shorn in the spring; for among the presents which Abigail made to David, five measures of parched corn are mentioned. But we know, from other passages of Scripture, that they were accustomed to use parched corn when it was full grown, but not ripe; for the people of Israel were commanded in the law not to eat parched corn nor green ears, until the self same day they had made an offering to the Lord.^b

This time seems to have been spent by the eastern swains, in more than usual hilarity. And it may be inferred from several hints in the Scriptures, that the wealthier proprietors invited their friends and dependants to sumptuous entertainments. Nabal, on that joyous occasion, which the servants of David called a good, or festive day, although a churlish and niggardly man, "held a feast in his house, like the feast of a king;"^c and on a similar occasion, Absalom treated his friends and relations in the same magnificent style. The modern Arabs are more frugal and parsimonious; yet their hearts, so little accustomed to expand with joyous feelings, acknowledge the powerful influence of increasing wealth, and dispose them to indulge in greater jollity than usual. On these occasions, they perhaps kill a lamb, or a goat, and treat their relations and friends; and at once to testify their respect for their guests, and add to the luxury of

says: "Qui etiam nunc vellunt (oves) ante triduo habent jejunas, quod languidæ minus radices lanæ retinent." See also Plin. Hist. Nat. lib. viii, cap. 46. ^b Lev. xxiii, 14. ^c 1 Sam. xxv, 36.

the feast, crown the festive board with new cheese and milk^d; dates and honey.^e

Bottles of goat skin, with the hairy side inwards, receive the milk of their flocks: and when they wish to make butter, they put the cream into a goat skin, prepared in the same manner, which they suspend in their tents, and then pressing it to and fro, in one uniform direction, quickly produce a separation of the unctuous from the wheyey part of the fluid.^f In the Levant, they tread upon the skin with their feet, which produces the same effect. The last method of separating the butter from the milk, perhaps may throw light upon a passage in Job, of some difficulty: "When I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil."^g Commentators have observed, what must be obvious to every reader, that the afflicted patriarch meant to say, he once possessed great abundance of these products; but they have not been able to account for the manner of his expression. The way of a great personage was sometimes swept, sometimes strewed with flowers, sometimes watered; but never, as far as we know, moistened with butter. The feet were sometimes anointed with oil, in which odoriferous substances had been infused; but to them, butter was never applied. It is more natural to suppose, that these words of Job referred to the method of churning their milk, by treading upon large skins full of cream, with their bare feet. It conveys a still more lively idea of the exuberant

^d Harmer's Observ. vol. i, p. 194.

^e Niebuhr's Arabia, vol. i, p. 211. Bochart. Hieroz. lib. ii, c. 45, p. 480.

^f Chandler's Trav. p. 2. Shaw's Trav. vol. i, p. 308. See also Varro de Re Rustica, lib. ii, cap. 11. Columella de Re Rust. lib. viii, cap. 11.

Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. xxviii, cap. 9.

^g Job xxix, 6.

plenty which Job once possessed, if this method was adopted, when they had large quantities of milk to churn. A variety of practice very similar to this, appears to have prevailed in the ancient vineyards. When a small quantity of grapes was to be pressed, it seems to have been done with the hand; for Pharaoh's butler dreamed that he took the grapes and pressed them in this manner into his master's cup. This, it must be admitted, was only a visionary scene; but we must suppose it corresponded with general custom. So, when they meant to churn a small quantity of cream, they suspended it in a skin, from the roof of the tent; and the female part of the family conducted the process. But when the quantity was very large, as it must have been in the extensive dairies of the patriarchs, who possessed such immense flocks and herds, it was put into a number of skins and churned by the feet of men.^h This, Mr. Harmer considers as no improbable account, and by no means an unnatural explanation of the phrase, "I washed my steps with butter;" and in the present state of our knowledge, perhaps a more satisfactory one cannot be given. Greece, indeed, lies at a great distance from the land of Uz, and the age when Job flourished is far removed from our times; but as a skin is still the churning vessel used by the Arabs in the Holy land, as well as in Barbary, and consequently, as their customs admit of little or no variation, the use of skins in churning, must belong to a very remote antiquity. And the same reason that might induce the more opulent Greeks, in the time of Chandler, to tread their cream rather than swing it in the tent, or between two poles as the Arabs generally do, might also induce the richer pro-

^h Harmer's Observ. vol. i, p. 440, 441.

prietors in Asia, who possessed such numerous flocks, to adopt the same custom. The expression, it must be allowed, is highly figurative, but not more so than many others, in which the oriental muse delights. The term washing, when used poetically, is not surely confined to cleansing the feet, by some purifying fluid ; for dipping the feet in the blood of the slain, the Psalmist calls washing the feet. Hence, to plunge them into cream or butter, or to sprinkle them profusely with it, may be called washing them in butter, with equal propriety ; and walking in it, washing the steps.

The butter is carried to market in the same goat skins in which it is churned. In consequence of this mode of management, it becomes necessary to melt and strain it, in order to separate the impurities ; a process by which it acquires a certain rancid taste, disagreeable, for the most part, to strangers, though not to the natives.ⁱ To this custom of melting the butter, in order to clarify it, Zophar seems to allude, in his description of the state and portion of a wicked man : “ He shall not see the rivers, the floods, the brooks of honey and butter.”^j As the flowing of honey from the comb into the vessels in which it is to be kept, may, by a bold figure, be compared to a little river ; so may clarified butter, when poured into the jars in which it is preserved for use. The wicked man, says Zophar, shall not see the rivulets, much less the rivers, still less the torrents of honey and butter (as the clause ought to be rendered), which the righteous may hope to possess. In our excellent translation, the beauty of the climax in this instance is lost ; for instead of continuing to rise, it sinks in the close, ending with brook,

ⁱ Shaw's Trav. vol. i, p. 308.

^j Job xx, 17.

after mentioning rivers and torrents ; but in the original, it is equally striking and well conducted.

The method of making butter in the east, illustrates the conduct of Jael, the wife of Heber, described in the book of Judges : “ And Sisera said unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink, for I am thirsty: and she opened a bottle of milk, and gave him drink, and covered him.” In the song of Deborah, the statement is repeated : “ He asked water, and she gave him milk, she brought forth butter in a lordly dish.”^k The word (חמאה) hemah, which our translators rendered butter, properly signifies cream ; which is undoubtedly the meaning of it in this passage, for Sisera complained of thirst, and asked a little water to quench it, a purpose to which butter is but little adapted. Mr. Harmer indeed urges the same objection to cream, which, he contends, few people would think a very proper beverage for one that was extremely thirsty ; and concludes, that it must have been butter-milk which Jael, who had just been churning, gave to Sisera.^l But the opinion of Dr. Russel is preferable, that the hemah of the Scriptures, is probably the same as the haymak of the Arabs, which is not, as Harmer supposed, simple cream, but cream produced by simmering fresh sheeps’ milk for some hours over a slow fire. It could not be butter newly churned, which Jael presented to Sisera, because the Arab butter is apt to be foul, and is commonly passed through a strainer before it is used ; and Russel declares, he never saw butter offered to a stranger, but always haymak ; nor did he ever observe the orientals drink butter-milk, but always leban, which is coagulated sour milk, diluted with water. It

^k Judg. iv, 19, and v, 25. ^l Observ. vol. i, p. 444.

was leban, therefore, which Pococke mistook for butter-milk, with which the Arabs treated him in the Holy land.^m A similar conclusion may be drawn concerning the butter and milk which the wife of Heber presented to Sisera; they were forced cream or haymak, and leban, or coagulated sour milk diluted with water, which is a common and refreshing beverage in those sultry regions.

The art of coagulating milk, and converting it into cheese, was known among the Syrian shepherds, from the remotest times. Instead of runnet, they turn the milk, especially in the summer season, with sour butter-milk, the flowers of the great-headed thistle, or wild artichoke; and, putting the curds afterwards into small baskets made with rushes, or with the dwarf palm, they bind them up close, and press them. These cheeses are rarely above two or three pounds weight; and in shape and size, resemble our penny loaves. Oriental cheeses are sometimes of so very soft a consistence, after they are pressed, and even when they are set upon the table, that they bear a very near resemblance to curds, or to coagulated milk, which forms a very considerable part of eastern diet.ⁿ But the ten cheeses which David carried to the camp of Saul, seem to have been fully formed, pressed and sufficiently dried, to admit of their being removed from one place to another, without the frames in which they were made.^o

The word (הרוד) harouts, derived from a verb which

^m Trav. vol. ii, part 2, p. 25.

ⁿ When Polyphemus had coagulated the half of his milk, he laid it up for use in osier baskets. *Odyssey*, lib. ix, l. 246, 247. And when Ulysses examined his cave, he was surprised at the number of these utensils groaning under the weight of cheeses. L. 219.—Varro says some of the cheeses made in Italy were soft, others hard, according to their age. In Palestine they were all soft. *De Re Rust.* lib. ii, cap. 10.

^o 1 Sam. xvii, 18. Shaw's Trav. vol. i, p. 308.

signifies to cut off, frequently signifies a piece or lump of any thing. Thus, in Daniel, it means a ruin, or heap of ruins;^p in the book of Job, a piece of rock or stone;^q and in the prophecies of Zechariah, a lump of native gold.^r Hence, the phrase under consideration literally signifies ten lumps; and the word (החלב) *hahleb*, is added to determine what they were, ten lumps of milk, which can mean nothing else than ten cheeses; for what are these but lumps of coagulated milk? Our translators did not, as Harmer says, leave out the last word as unnecessary, but gave the genuine meaning of the whole phrase. This exposition is supported by the Septuagint, in which it is rendered by *τρυφαλίδας τῆς γαλακτος*, explained by Hesychius, pieces of the tender cheese or curd. But, neither the original term, nor the exposition of these different authors, determines whether the coagulated milk remained in the basket, or, although still new and fresh, had acquired such consistency as to admit of being carried to so great a distance without the frame. As we know, however, that the eastern cheeses were pressed after they were bound up in the rush mould, it is more probable, they were not in the state of soft curd, but of new cheese.

The shepherds of Syria and the east have, from the remotest antiquity, carried on a considerable trade with the circumjacent cities. The people of Aleppo are still supplied with the greater part of their butter, their cheese, and their cattle for slaughter, by the Arabs, Kushwans, or Turcomans, who travel about the country, with their flocks and herds, as did the patriarchs of old.^s It was undoubtedly by trading with the ancient cities of Canaan in

^p Dan. ix, 25.

^q Job xli, 30.

^r Zech. ix, 3.

^s Russel's Hist. vol. i, p. 165, 388.

such articles of provision, that Abraham became so rich in silver and gold. The lucrative commerce which Jacob his grandson carried on with the inhabitants of Shechem, is mentioned by Hamor their prince, and urged as a reason of alliance and union: "These men are peaceable with us; therefore, let them dwell in the land, and trade therein; for the land, behold it is large enough for them." While the wealth of the country, where they tended their flocks and herds, flowed into the coffers of these shepherd princes, in a steady and copious stream; their simple and frugal manner of living, required but little expense for the support of their numerous households; and their nomadic state, prevented them from contracting alliances, or forming connections of an expensive nature. Hence, in a few years, they amassed large quantities of the precious metals; they multiplied their flocks and their herds, till they covered the face of the country for many miles; they engaged a numerous train of servants from the surrounding towns and villages, and had servants born in their house, of the slaves whom they had purchased, or taken prisoners in war. When Abraham heard that his brother Lot was taken captive by the king of Shinar and his confederates, he armed his trained servants born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan. The truth of the Scripture accounts is verified by the present state of the Arabian chieftains in those very places where Abraham and his descendants formerly wandered. By the unimpeachable testimony of Russel, they are equally rich, and powerful, and independent, as were these renowned patriarchs; they are surrounded with servants and retainers, equally numerous, resolute and faith-

ful; they are in fine, the modern patriarchs of the east.^u In Persia and in Turkey, where the country is full of Turcoman shepherds, their chiefs appear with a great train of servants, richly clothed and mounted. Chardin fell in with one of these pastoral chieftains between Parthia and Hyrcania, whose train filled him at once with surprise and alarm. The Turcoman had more than ten led horses, with harness all of solid gold and silver. He was accompanied by many shepherds on horseback, and well armed. They treated the traveller civilly, and answered all the questions his curiosity prompted him to put to them, upon their manner of life. The whole country, for ten leagues, was full of their flocks. An hour after, the chieftain's wives, and those of his principal attendants, passed along in a line: four of them rode in great square baskets, carried two upon a camel, which were not close covered. The rest were on camels, on asses, and on horseback; most of them with their faces unveiled, among whom were some very beautiful women. From this display of pastoral magnificence, which Chardin had an opportunity of contemplating, we are enabled to form a very clear idea of the splendour and elegance in which Abraham and other patriarchs lived; and of the beauty which the sacred historian ascribes to Sarah, Rebecca, and Rachel, who had very fair complexions.^v

These Turcoman shepherds, besides their lucrative trade in the various products of their flocks and herds, engage a little in agriculture. Those in Syria and Palestine do the same; and in Barbary, it is very common. The Bedouin Arabs in that country, are divided into tribes,

^u La Roque Voy. dans la Palest. p. 157.

^v Chardin's MS. vol. vi. Harmer's Observ. vol. i, p. 208, 209, 210.

like their brethren in other parts, and live in tents, formed into itinerant villages : these nomadic villagers farm lands from the inhabitants of the towns, sow and cultivate them, paying the rent with the produce ; and are said to discover great skill in choosing the most advantageous soils for every season.^w

We are not informed whether Abraham attempted to raise any part of his supplies in this way ; but the successful exertions of his son Isaac, in cultivating the soil, are distinctly stated in the memoir of his life ; and it may be supposed, from the richness of his harvests in the fields of Gerar, that he possessed the intelligence for which the Arabian shepherds in Barbary are so celebrated.^x It would seem too, from the circumstances of the story, that he rented the lands from the fixed inhabitants ; for the king of Gerar, envying his prosperity, compelled him to remove from them to another part of the country, which he would scarcely have ventured to do, had they been unappropriated lands, or his own property. The manner in which the king addressed him, clearly shews that he dreaded his power, as well as envied his success ; and that Isaac was not a person to be treated with unceremonious rudeness. “ Go from us, for thou art much mightier than we,” was the language of a man, conscious of his weakness and inferiority. Had Isaac, therefore, cultivated lands in the neighbourhood of Gerar, to which the people of that city had no just claim, the petty prince of that town, whom Isaac might have crushed when he pleased, had not presumed to disturb his operations. But if the right of cultivating these lands depended upon an agree-

^w Shaw's Trav. vol. i, p. 426, &c. Harmer's Observ. vol. i, p. 138-140.

^x Gen. xxvi, 12.

ment with the men of Gerar, when the crop for which the contract had been made was gathered in, the king of that city might, without injustice, refuse to renew it, and assign this as the reason. The view now given, receives additional confirmation from the address of Isaac to Abimelech, the king of Gerar, when, probably dreading the consequence of his uncourteous behaviour, he made him a visit in his tent, and endeavoured to secure his friendship by a solemn treaty: "Wherefore," said Isaac, "come ye to me, seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you?" The patriarch does not complain, that he was dispossessed of lands which belonged to himself, or forcibly driven from those which no man owned; but in saying, Ye have sent me away from you, he seems to admit, that the lands were theirs, and that he had farmed them by their permission, or by mutual compact, which they refused from envy to renew.

The patriarch Abraham, following the dictates of a wise policy, concluded treaties of peace and alliance with some of the principal shepherds in his neighbourhood; of whom, only the names of Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre are mentioned in the sacred text. These were his principal auxiliaries in the war with the king of Shinar, and his confederates; and they seem, from the honourable mention he makes of them, after his return from the battle, to the king of Sodom, to have been of essential service in that expedition. Isaac, animated by the principles, and imitating the policy of his renowned father, did not refuse the proffered friendship of Abimelech, the king of Gerar, although he was not insensible to the unkind treatment he had received. This treaty, which furnishes a very strong proof of Isaac's power, and the high respect attached to his

name, is given at full length by Moses, and is remarkable for being the first document of the kind, in the records of history. "Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar, and Ahuzzath, one of his friends, and Phichol, the chief captain of his army. And Isaac said unto them, Wherefore come ye unto me, seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you? And they said, We saw certainly, that the Lord was with thee; and we said, let there be now an oath betwixt us, even betwixt us and thee; and let us make a covenant with thee, that thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done unto thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in peace; thou art now the blessed of the Lord." After this negotiation, which is not less singular, in the history of the diplomatic corps, for its brevity, than for its moderation and good faith; "he made them a feast, and they did eat and drink. And they rose up betimes in the morning, and swore one to another; and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace."^a In the same manner, family alliances are frequent among the Arabian shepherds, and indeed rendered necessary, by the state of continual warfare in which they live with the neighbouring tribes. The eighteen Arab emirs of the family which d'Arvieux visited, kept near one another, encamping at no greater distance from their chief than a league or two, and all removing together every month, sometimes every fortnight, as their cattle wanted fresh pasture, that they might be able to assemble with ease.^b But while Abraham and Isaac cultivated the friendship of their neighbours, entered into treaties of peace and amity with the kings and princes of Canaan, and entertained them in their tents,—Ishmael,

^a Gen. xxvi, 31.

^b La Roque Voy. dans la Palest. p. 103, 106.

animated by different principles and views, commenced a course of action, after leaving his father's house, so new and unprecedented, that it was made the subject of a distinct prediction. Standing on the verge of a burning desert, which he claimed as his proper inheritance, he assumed from the beginning, a hostile attitude, spurned the ties of peace and friendship, and laid all the surrounding tribes under contribution. When he drew upon himself and his adherents the resentment of the fixed inhabitants, and was afraid to risk their attack, he withdrew into the depths of the great wilderness, where none could follow him with hopes of success. In the same manner have his descendants lived; when threatened with an unequal contest, they will strike their tents upon less than two hours warning, and retire immediately, with all their effects, into the deserts, with whose wells and forage they only are acquainted. Within those impenetrable barriers, which are for ever guarded by hunger and thirst, the Arabians regard with utter contempt, the warlike array of the most powerful nations.^c

To these circumstances the prophet seems to allude, in the charge which he addresses to Dedan and Hazor: "Flee ye, turn back, dwell deep, O inhabitants of Dedan; for I will bring the calamity of Esau upon him, the time that I will visit him."^d Dedan, it has been already observed, was one of the sons of Cush, whose first settlement was in the country adjoining to his brother Canaan on the south, a part of Arabia. Hazor, which is joined with Dedan in this charge, was a city of Canaan, near the waters of Merom, in upper Galilee, the regal city of Jabin, the most powerful prince in that part of the coun-

^c La Roque Voy. dans la Palest. p. 190, 191.

^d Jer. xlix, 8, 30.

try. It was this king who summoned the princes around him to battle against Joshua, and the armies of Israel; but being entirely routed, he lost his kingdom and his life together, and Hazor his capital was reduced to ashes. It was afterwards rebuilt by the Canaanites, and became once more the seat of empire; but was again destroyed by the armies of Israel, under the command of Deborah and Barak.^e After the war, it was restored by the remains of its ancient inhabitants; and although it never recovered its former grandeur and importance, it continued till the time of Jeremiah. From this statement it is clear, that Hazor was the capital of a Canaanitish nation, not, as Harmer contends, a station of Arabian shepherds. The phrase to “dwell deep,” in relation to the fixed inhabitants of that city, and the kingdom of which it was the capital, must therefore refer to the caverns in Galilee and the neighbourhood, in whose capacious recesses they were accustomed to take refuge in time of war. Or, if it signify to dwell far remote from the threatened danger, the many other caverns beyond Damascus, towards Arabia, which the prophet might allude to, were at a sufficient distance to justify his language. Nor is it inconsistent with the manners of the Arabians, as Harmer supposes, to retire into caves and dens of the earth for shelter; for the Bedouins in the neighbourhood of Aleppo, who encamp near the gates in the spring, inhabit grottoes in the winter.^f And Mahomed mentions an Arabian tribe, that hewed houses out of the mountains for their security.^g To these caverns, both the wandering

^e Josh. xi, 10, 11. Judg. iv, 24.

^f Russel's Hist. of Aleppo, vol. i, p. 162.

^g Koran, chap. xv and xxvi.

Arabs and the fixed inhabitants, certainly retreated in time of danger ; although the more common practice of the former, was to retire into the depth of their terrible deserts, where no enemy could disturb their repose.

The generous hospitality displayed by the Syrian shepherds, commands the applause of every reader. Of their kind attention to strangers, the patriarch Abraham furnishes an illustrious example. He was sitting in his tent door in the heat of the day, when three strangers met his eye ; starting from his seat, he ran to meet them, bowed himself to the ground, and invited them to an entertainment under the oak, whose extended arms screened his tent, and offered at the same time to the passing travellers a refreshing shade. The invitation was accepted, and a calf was immediately killed, and cakes of fine flour were baked for the repast. But a correct and lively idea of this pleasing scene, can be obtained only from the simple and beautiful description of the inspired historian : “ And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth. And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man ; and he hasted to dress it. And he took butter and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them ; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.”^h In this narrative, we have a number of circumstances very different from our customs, and even from our ideas of propriety. We are ready to suppose that the patriarch, who lived in a state of princely splendour and affluence, would have had a variety of provisions ready prepared for his own table, and for the en-

^h Gen. xviii, 6, 7, 8.

tertainment of those strangers whom he might think proper to invite. But it was now the heat of the day; Abraham, according to the custom of that country, had already dined, and there was time enough to kill meat for supper. Fresh meat is not preserved from one meal to another in the east, as in the colder latitudes, but is killed and dressed for each repast, the residue of the former meal being always consumed by the attendants and servants. One reason for this custom is, the impossibility of preserving fresh meat long in those burning climates. For the same reason, they bake their bread just as it is needed. These facts account for such a man as Abraham having neither meat nor bread to set before the angels, when they came to his tent on their way to Sodom.ⁱ

The modern Arabs still practise the ardent hospitality of their renowned ancestor, both in their encampments and in their villages. “When a stranger enters one of their stations, where he knows nobody, he inquires for the *menzil*, which is the place destined for the reception of travellers, and desires to speak with the sheik, the head man of the settlement, or at least his representative. After saluting him, he signifies his want of a dinner, or his wish to sup or lodge in the village. The sheik bids him welcome, and assures him that he could not do him and his people a greater pleasure. He then marches before the stranger to the *menzil*, where he takes up his abode, and is furnished with every accommodation the place can afford. But if the sheik happens to be absent, a stranger

ⁱ See Harmer's *Observ.* vol. ii, p. 84, 226. See also Forbes's *Orient. Mem.* vol. i, p. 215, *et seq.*—In ancient Greece the shepherds were not less renowned for kindness to strangers and the poor, whom they considered as sent by Jupiter to their care:

——— πρὸς γὰρ Διὸς εἰσὶν ἅπαντες

ἔειναι τε, πῶλοί τε

Odyss. lib. xiv, l. 57, 58.

may proceed at once to the menzil, and call for every thing he wants. A stranger, however, seldom has occasion for all this ; for as soon as the villagers see a stranger coming, they inform the sheik of it, who goes to meet him, accompanied by some of his people, and having saluted him, asks if he would dine in the village, or whether he chose to stay the whole night there. If he answer that he would only eat a morsel and go forward, and that he chose to stay under some tree in the vicinity, the sheik goes, or sends his people into the village, to cause a collation to be brought ; and in a little time they return with provisions of every kind, according to the season. When several strangers are to lodge for the night in the settlement, the preliminary ceremonies being observed, the women belonging to the sheik's house, having marked the number of the guests, never fail to provide a sufficient quantity of meat for the entertainment of the travellers, and of those who are to bear them company, and quickly make it into soup, or dress it in a variety of ways, according to their customs, which they send to the menzil by the sheik's servants, in wooden bowls, placed on a great round straw mat, which usually serves them for a table. These dishes being set in order, with many others, in which are eggs, cheese, fruit, sallad, sour-curdled milk, or leban, and all that they have to treat their friends with, which they set before them at once, that every one may eat as he likes ; the sheik begs the strangers to sit round the mat, sitting down with them himself, with the other peasants of fashion belonging to the village, in order to do them honour ; they make no use of knives at table, the meat being all cut into little bits." ^j This picture of oriental hospitality, in modern times, will enable the reader

^j La Roque de la Palest. p. 124-129.

to form a clear and precise idea of the manner in which Abraham entertained his guests under the spreading oak at Mamre. The most remarkable difference is, that the sheik sat down with his guests; while, to express the extreme reverence with which the patriarch treated his visitors, he stood by them during the time of their repast.

The Arab chieftan who entertained lord Belmore and his party “sat by, and, out of respect for his guests, did not mean to partake of any thing till they were satisfied.” When they had finished their dinner, a servant came round with a pitcher full of water, part of which he poured upon their hands, the only instruments of feeding with which they were favoured; when the first had washed and dried his hands with the towel, which accompanied the basin, he went to the second, and so round the company.^k

Abraham on that occasion, killed a calf for the entertainment of his guests, although they only proposed to stop for a short refreshment, in testimony of his munificence towards persons whom he seems to have regarded with uncommon reverence. The quantity of food prepared for the strangers, by the hospitable patriarch, is apt to excite our surprise; he dressed a whole calf, and three measures of meal made into cakes, which comes to more than two of our bushels, and nearly to fifty-six pounds of our weight. It is probable that, by this ample provision, Abraham meant at once to consult his own credit, to express the generous liberality which glowed in his bosom, and the profound respect which he felt for the strangers, in whose form and mein, perhaps, he discovered from the first, something which betokened more than mortal excellence.

^k Richardson's Trav. vol. ii, p. 229.

The patriarchal shepherds often amused themselves, or supplied their wants, by hunting. It seems to have been an exercise in which Esau excelled; and the familiar way in which his father Isaac commanded him to take his weapons, his quiver and his bow, and go out to the field and take him some venison, clearly shews, that the patriarchs, and their descendants, frequently indulged in the pleasures of the chase. The snare and the trap, the quiver and the bow, were the first implements of the hunter. At this exercise the Arabs, and according to Dr. Shaw, the eastern nations in general, are very dexterous. “ Their method of hunting the wild boar is this; after they have roused the beast from his hiding place, and pursued him into some adjacent field, their first endeavour is, by frequently overtaking and turning him, to tire and perplex him, and then watching an opportunity, they either throw their lances at him from a distance, or else coming close by his side, which is the most valiant way, they lodge their spears in his body.”

“ At the hunting of the lion, a whole district is summoned to appear, who, forming themselves first into a circle, inclose a space of four or five miles in compass, according to the number of the people, and the quality of the ground which is pitched upon for the scene of action. The footmen advance first, rushing into the thickets with their dogs and spears, to put up the game; while the horsemen, keeping a little behind, are always ready to charge upon the first sally of the wild beast. In this manner they proceed, still contracting their circle, till they all at last close in together, or meet with some other game to divert them. The accidental pastime on these occasions, is sometimes very entertaining; for the several different sorts of ani-

mals that lie within this compass, being thus driven together, or frightened from their dens, they rarely fail of having a variety of agreeable chases after hares, jackalls, hyænas, and other wild beasts. The manner of hunting with the falcon is thus described by Hasselquist, who had an excellent opportunity of seeing the sport: "An Arab, mounting a swift courser, held a falcon in his hand, which he let loose when he saw the wild goat, of which he was in quest, on the top of a mountain. The falcon attacked it from time to time, fastening its talons on or near the throat, till the huntsman coming up, took it alive, and cut its throat; the falcon drinking the blood as a reward for his services."

"Those who delight in fowling, do not spring the game with dogs, as we do; but, shading themselves with an oblong piece of canvas, stretched over a couple of reeds or sticks, like a door, they walk with it through the several brakes and avenues, where they expect to find game. The canvas is usually spotted, or painted with the figure of a leopard, and perforated near the top in a few places, for the fowler to look through, and observe what passes before him. The partridge and other gregarious birds, when the canvas approaches, will covey together, although they were feeding before at some distance from one another. The woodcock, quail, and other birds, which do not commonly feed in flocks, will, at sight of the extended canvas, stand still and look with astonishment; which gives the sportsman an opportunity of coming very near them; and then resting the canvas upon the ground, and directing the muzzle of his piece through one of the holes, he will sometimes shoot a whole covey at a time. The Arabs have another, but a more laborious method of catching these

birds ; for observing that they become languid and fatigued, after they have been hastily put up two or three times, they immediately run in upon them, and knock them down with their bludgeons. They are likewise well acquainted with that method of catching partridges called tunnelling; and to make the capture the greater, they will sometimes place behind the net, a cage with some tame ones within, which, by their perpetual chirping and calling, quickly bring down the coveys which are within hearing, and by that means destroy great numbers of them.¹ To hunt the jackall, which greatly abounds in that country, they sometimes use a leopard which has been trained to hunting from his youth. The hunter keeps the animal before him on his horse, and when he meets with a jackall, the leopard leaps down, and creeps along till he think himself within reach of the prey, when he leaps upon it with incredible agility, throwing himself seventeen or eighteen feet at a time." These statements illustrate the force and propriety of those passages of holy writ, which allude to the arts and implements of the hunter and the fowler, by which the timid victim is taken ere ever it is aware ; or the bold is compelled by main force, or by deadly wounds, to submit to his more cunning or powerful adversary. It is not without reason, the Psalmist rejoiced that the snare was broken, and his soul had escaped as a bird from the snare of the fowler ; and that God had brought his feet out of the net.^m

Before taking leave of this subject, it may not be improper to direct the reader's attention to a text which has long exercised the critical powers of expositors. When Joseph was going to introduce his father and his brethren

¹ Shaw's Trav. vol. i, p. 424. ^m Psa. xxv, 15.

to the Egyptian court, he instructed them to say they were shepherds, that they might be separated from the natives, and settled together in the land of Goshen ; a country abounding with rich and ample pastures, and lying nearest to Canaan, the place of their future residence. On this occasion the sacred writer observes, that “ every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians.” Cunæus, with great plausibility, ascribes the detestation of that people, to the ferocious dispositions and rebellious conduct of the shepherds who tended their flocks in the plains and marshes of Lower Egypt. “ These,” says that writer, “ were active and able men, but execrable to all the Egyptians, because they would not suffer them to lead their idle course of life in security. These men often excited great commotions, and sometimes created kings for themselves. It was on this account, that the Romans, in succeeding times, when they easily held the rest of Egypt in obedience, placed a strong garrison in all these parts. When you have taken the most exact survey of all circumstances, you will find this was the reason that made the Egyptians, even from the first, so ill affected to shepherds ; because these sedentary men and handicrafts, could not endure their fierce and active spirits. Pharaoh himself, when he had determined to abate and depress the growing numbers of the Israelites, spake to his subjects in this manner : “ The Israelites are stronger than we ; let us deal wisely, that they increase not, lest, when war arises, they join themselves to our enemies, and take up arms against us.”

But, this view does not account for the use of the term which is properly rendered abomination, and which indicates, not a ferocious and turbulent character, which is properly an object of dread and hatred, but a mean and

despicable person, that excites the scorn and contempt of his neighbours. It is readily admitted, that the detestation in which shepherds were held in Egypt, could not arise from their employment in the breeding of cattle; for the king himself, in the days of Joseph, had very numerous flocks and herds, in the management of which he did not think it unbecoming his dignity to take a lively interest. This is proved by the command to his favourite minister: "If thou knowest any men of activity among them, then make them rulers over my cattle."ⁿ Nor were his numerous subjects less attentive to this branch of industry; every one seems to have lived upon his paternal farm, part of which was converted into pasture. Hence, when money failed in the years of famine, "all the Egyptians came to Joseph, and said, Give us bread; for why should we die in thy presence? for the money faileth. And Joseph said, Give your cattle, and I will give you bread for your cattle, if money fail."^o But if Pharaoh and all his subjects, were themselves engaged in the rearing of stock, a shepherd could not be to them an object of general abhorrence. Besides, it was not unlawful in Egypt to deprive an ox or a sheep of life, and feast upon the flesh; for, in the temples, these animals were offered in sacrifice every day;^p and for what purpose did the Egyptians rear them on their farms, but to use them as food? The contempt in which this order of men were held, could not then be owing to the superstition of the nation in general. It may even be inferred from the command of Pharaoh to Joseph, requiring him to appoint the most active of his brethren rulers over his cattle, that the office of a

ⁿ Gen. xlvii, 6.

^o Ver. 15, 16.

^p Rollin's Ancient Hist. vol. i, p. 195.

shepherd was honourable among the Egyptians; for it could not be his design to degrade the brethren of his favourite minister. This idea is confirmed by Diodorus, who asserts, that husbandmen and shepherds were held in very great estimation in that country.^q But that writer states a fact, which furnishes the true solution of the difficulty—that in some parts of Egypt, shepherds were not suffered.^r The contempt of shepherds seems, therefore, to have been confined to some parts of the kingdom; probably to the royal city, and the principal towns in Upper Egypt, where the luxury of a court, or the wealth and splendour of the inhabitants, taught them to look down with contempt and loathing upon those humble peasants. But the true reason seems to be stated by Herodotus, who informs us that those who worship in the temple of the Theban Jupiter, or belong to the district of Thebes the ancient capital of Egypt, abstained from sheep and sacrificed goats. But sheep and oxen were the animals which the shepherds usually killed for general use. It was natural, therefore, for that superstitious people to regard with abhorrence those who were in the daily practice of slaughtering the objects of their religious veneration. But this custom was confined to the district of Thebes; for, according to the same writer, “in the temple of Mendes, and in the whole Mendesian district, goats were preserved and sheep sacrificed.”^s Shepherds, therefore, might be abhorred in one part of Egypt and honoured in another. The sagacious prime minister of Egypt, desirous to remove his brethren from the fascinations of wealth and power, directed them to give such an account of themselves, that the counsellors of Pharaoh, from their

^q Lib. i, cap. 74, p. 85.

^r Rollin's Anc. Hist. vol. i, p. 220.

^s Lib. ii, cap. 42.

dislike of the mean employment in which they had been educated, might grant their request, and suffer them to settle in Goshen, a land of shepherds, far removed from the dangerous blandishments of a court.

CHAP. II.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF SCRIPTURE FROM THE STATE OF AGRICULTURE IN THE EAST.

Adam the first husbandman.—Progress of agriculture.—Division of the surface into fields—Portions and acres.—Land of Promise, distinguished by extraordinary fruitfulness.—The plough.—Ploughshare.—Goad.—Beasts yoked in the plough.—Manner of dressing their fields.—Agriculture, the suggestion of Heaven.—Oriental husbandmen prosecute their labours almost naked.—Various kinds of grain sown.—The harrow.—The seed time attended with considerable danger.—Setting the dry grass on fire.—Harvest. Reapers in Palestine use the sickle.—Women employed in reaping.—Gleaners.—The thrashing-floor.—Methods of thrashing out the grain.—Method of winnowing.—The grain lodged in subterraneous magazines.—Reserved for daily use in earthen jars.—Wonderful rapidity of vegetation.—Hay seldom or never made.—The oriental gardens.—Their walls and hedges.—Necessity of water.—Method of distributing it.—Solomon's gardens.—Arrangement of the plots in oriental gardens.—Particular attention bestowed on the culture of the vine.—Wine-press.—Towers in their vineyards.—The vineyard, a scene of joy and singing.—Time of ripe grapes.—Treading the grapes.—Olive oil expressed in the same manner.—The hook or sickle for cutting down the grapes.—Beating the olive trees.—Villas in the vineyards.—Inestimable value of shade and water in the east.—Parties of pleasure in the Syrian gardens.

WHEN God placed Adam in paradise, he instructed him “to dress and keep it:” to work and labour the ground, let in the influences of heaven, prune the trees, cherish the

plants, preserve the fruits from the beasts of the field, and the fowls of heaven, which had access to the garden; and to keep all his abode, and the domain around it, in good order. This was the first employment of man, which, by the wise and benevolent arrangements of his Maker, was to cheer and accelerate the hours of innocence and peace. After his expulsion from the garden on account of his transgression, the command which he had received at his formation, to cultivate the ground, was renewed; and the curse under which it was laid, rendered his exertions more necessary than before. This may be one reason that Adam initiated his eldest son in the art of cultivating the soil, which now refused to produce the necessaries of life in sufficient abundance and perfection, without the skill and industry of man; while he devoted Abel, his younger son, to the easier and more simple occupation of a shepherd.

In the first ages of the world, men were chiefly employed in digging and throwing up the earth, by means of rude and inconvenient implements: but Noah made important advances in the art of husbandry, and found out fitter instruments of cultivation than were known before his time. This patriarch, the second father of our family, is called a man of the ground—in our translation, a husbandman, because of his improvements in agriculture, and his inventions for subduing and fertilizing the soil. In consequence of the divine malediction, useless or noxious plants obtained the ascendancy, and obstructed the growth of esculent vegetables. These obstructions were to be removed, which required great pains and labour; and the sterility of the ground was to be corrected, and its productive energy excited and improved, by the operations of the plough.

The surface of the ground was probably divided into fields, and secured to individual proprietors, long before the flood. By that dreadful catastrophe, the whole earth reverted to its natural, undivided, unappropriated state; but how long it continued in common, we have no means of ascertaining.^b In the days of Abraham, who lived at no great distance of time from the flood, the lands of Canaan had become in some degree the exclusive property of the nation by whom they were occupied; and been even subdivided into small fields, and claimed as the legal inheritance of private individuals, except the pastures which appear to have remained in common through many succeeding ages. The patriarch bought a field from Ephron the Hittite, for a possession of a burying-place; and the transaction shews, that the property was perfectly well defined; that Ephron had the same absolute right to it, as any landed proprietor of our times has to his estate. And upon the purchase money being paid, the sacred historian says, “The field of Ephron which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field and the cave which was therein; and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession, in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city.”^c The minute division of landed property in Egypt, is attested by the same infallible authority; for,

^b The Arabian husbandmen on the east side of Jordan wear long white shirts girded round the loins, but neither turbans nor other coverings for their heads. They retain the beard, while the hair is suffered to hang in long and curling locks over the neck. They possess their lands in common; and the only claim they have to the possession of any particular spot, is that of having plowed and sown it, which entitles the person who does so to reap the harvest upon it for that season. Buckingham's Trav. vol. ii, p. 115, 116.

^c Gen. xxiii, 11, 20.

under the administration of Joseph, the people of that country were compelled by the famine to sell "every man his field;" and "Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharoah." When the sons of Israel had conquered the land of promise, it was, by the divine command, surveyed and divided by lot, first among the twelve tribes; and then the portion of each tribe was laid out in separate inheritances, according to the number of the families composing the tribe; and thus every man in the nation had his field, which he was directed to cultivate for the support of himself and his family. To prevent mistake and litigation, these fields were marked off by stones set up on the limits, which could not be removed without incurring the wrath of heaven. The divine command, in relation to this matter, runs in these terms: "Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's land-mark, which they of old time have set in thine inheritance, which thou shalt inherit in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee to possess."^d In Persia, land-marks are still used: in the journey from Arzroum to Amasia, Morier found the boundaries of each man's possession, here and there, marked by large stones.^e Land-marks were used in Greece long before the age of Homer; for when Minerva fought with Mars, she seized with her powerful hand, a piece of rock, lying in the plain, black, rugged and large, which ancient men had placed to mark the boundary of the field.^f

Their inheritances were again divided into parts, which the Hebrews distinguished by the name of portions, or pieces of ground; and distributed by measure into acres. The distribution of a field into acres, is ascertained by a

^d Deut. xix, 14.

^e Trav. vol. i, p. 332.

^f Iliad, lib. xxi, l. 405, 406.

passage in the first book of Samuel, which is couched in these terms : “ And that first slaughter which Jonathan and his armour-bearer made, was about twenty men, within as it were an half acre of land, which a yoke of oxen might plow.”^f

The land of promise was distinguished by extraordinary fruitfulness : Jehovah was pleased, in a special manner, to bless the springing of the earth, and to crown the year with his goodness ;^g yet this peculiar favour did not supersede the vigilance and activity of the husbandman. The prophet Isaiah intimates, that his countrymen began their operations in the field by erecting fences, and gathering out the stones, and clearing away other incumbrances : “ My well beloved has a vineyard in a very fruitful hill ; and he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof.”^h Thorns, or other useless plants, were either dug up by the roots, or consumed by fire. “ For thus saith the Lord to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns.”ⁱ Rich as the soil of Palestine certainly is, it refused at no time the aid of manure, which travellers and historians tell us is the case in some countries. This fact we discover in several parts of Scripture, but particularly in the parable

^f 1 Sam. xiv, 14.

^g Mr. Buckingham, who describes the mountainous regions of Judea, as for the most part, an assemblage of naked rocks and precipices, admits the surprising richness of the elevated plains, “ abounding with the most beautiful prospects, clothed with thick forests, varied with verdant slopes, and possessing extensive levels of a fine red soil. The landscape alone, which varied at every turn, and gave us new beauties from every different point of view, was, of itself, worth all the pains of an excursion to the eastward of Jordan.” Trav. vol. ii, p. 104, 105, 106-108, 390, &c. &c.

^h Isa. v, 1, 2.

ⁱ Jer. iv, 3.

of the barren fig tree : “ Let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it ; and if it bear fruit, well ; and if not, then shall we cut it down.”^j Thus we find the Jewish farmer, however highly favoured, was obliged to follow the rule which Virgil prescribed to his countrymen, to saturate the parched soil with rich dung, and scatter sordid ashes upon the exhausted lands :

——— “ arida tantum

Ne saturare fimo pingui pudeat sola : neve

Effetos cinerem immundum jactare per agros.” *Geor. lib. i, l. 79.*

Not satisfied with cultivating the rich plains and fertile valleys of his native land, he reduced the barren rocks and rugged mountains under his dominion, and compelled them to minister to his necessities. For this purpose he covered them with earth ; or, where this was impracticable, he constructed walls of loose stones, in parallel rows along their sides, to support the mould, and prevent it from being washed down by the rains. On these circular plots of excellent soil, which gradually rose one above another, from the base to the very summits of the mountains, he raised abundant crops of corn and other esculent vegetables : or, where the declivity was too rocky, he planted the vine and the olive, which delight in such situations, and which rewarded his toil with the most picturesque scenery, and the richest products. Thus, the places where only the wild goat wandered and the eagle screamed, which appeared to be doomed to perpetual nakedness and sterility, were converted by the bold and persevering industry of the Syrian husbandman into cornfields and gardens, vineyards and olive plantations, the manifest traces of which, in all the mountains of Pales-

^j Luke xiii, 8.

tine, remain to this day. The inhabitants of that "good land," literally sang from the top of the rock when it flowed with the blood of the grape and poured them "out rivers of oil."^k

The ground, as in our own country, was broken up with the plough.^l The Syrian plough, which was probably used in all the regions around, is a very simple frame, and commonly so light, that a man of moderate strength might carry it in one hand.^m Volney states that in Syria, it is often nothing else than the branch of a tree, cut below a bifurcation and used without wheels. It is drawn by asses and cows, seldom by oxen.ⁿ And Dr. Russel informs us, the plowing of Syria is performed often by a little cow, at most with two, and sometimes only by an ass.^o In Persia it is for the most part drawn by one ox only, and not unfrequently even by an ass, although it is more ponderous than in Palestine.^p With such an imperfect instrument, the Syrian husbandman can do little more than scratch the surface of his field, or clear away the stones or weeds that encumber it, and prevent the seed from reaching the soil. The ploughshare is a "piece of iron, broad, but not large, which tips the end of the shaft." So much does it resemble the short

^k Maundrell's Journey, p. 101. Isa. xlii, 11. Job ix, 6. See also Pococke's Trav. vol. ii, part i, p. 42. Richardson's Trav. vol. ii, p. 226, 348. Buckingham's Trav. in Palestine, vol. i, p. 268.

^l See on this part of the subject vol. i, p. 439.

^m Russel's Hist. of Aleppo, vol. i, p. 73.

ⁿ Trav. vol. ii, p. 273.

^o Hist. of Aleppo, vol. i, p. 73.

^p Morier's Trav. vol. i, p. 60. Adam's Roman Antiquities, p. 537.—In Egypt they plough with two oxen: the plough is remarkably slight, and has only one handle, which the ploughman holds with one hand, and carries a long stick in the other. Richardson's Trav. vol. ii, p. 197.

sword used by the ancient warriors, that it may, with very little trouble, be converted into that deadly weapon ; and when the work of destruction is over, reduced again into its former shape, and applied to the purposes of agriculture. In allusion to the first operation, the prophet Joel summons the nations to leave their peaceful employments in the cultivated field, and buckle on their armour : “ Beat your plough-shares into swords, and your pruning-hooks into spears.”^a This beautiful image, the prophet Isaiah has reversed, and applied to the establishment of that profound and lasting peace which is to bless the Church of Christ in the latter days : “ And they shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks ; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”^r In similar strains the Roman poets sang :

——— “ squalent abductis arva colonis,
Et curvæ rigidum falces conflantur in ensem.” *Geor.* i, l. 506.

“ Sarcula cessabunt ; versique in pila ligones ;
Factaque de ratri pondere cassis erat.” *Ovid.* *Fast.* i, l. 697.

The plough used in Syria, is so light and simple in its construction, that the husbandman is under the necessity of guiding it with great care, bending over it, and loading it with his own weight, else the share would glide along the surface without making any incision. His mind should be wholly intent on his work, at once to press the plough into the ground, and direct it in a straight line. “ Let the ploughman,” said Hesiod, “ attend to his charge, and look before him ; not turn aside to look on his associates, but make straight furrows, and have his mind attentive to his work.”^s And Pliny : “ Unless the plough-

^a Joel iii, 10.

^r Isa. ii, 4.

^s Hesiod *Opera et Dies.* l. 444, 445.

man stoop forward" to press his plough into the soil, and conduct it properly, "he will turn it aside."^u To such careful and incessant exertion, our Lord alludes in that declaration: "No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of heaven."^v

The cattle are stimulated with a goad, which, in Syria, is seven or eight feet in length, armed with a sharp point of iron at one end, and at the other, with a plate of the same metal, shaped like a caulking chissel. One attendant only is necessary for each plough, as he who guides it with one hand, spurs the oxen with the point of the goad, and clears the earth with the plough-share, by its spaded heel, with the other.^w Stubborn and refractory oxen often resisted the goad and kicked it with their feet. Æschylus alludes to this occurrence in the following line:

Προς κεντρα μη λακτιζει, μη πησας μογης. *In Agamemnone*, l. 620.

"Kick not against the iron points, lest thou suffer pain."

Terence makes the same allusion in his *Phormion*:

"Nam quæ inscitia est

Adversum stimulum calces."

Act. i, scen. 2.

"For what ignorance is it to kick against the point?" This proverbial saying, the glorified Redeemer was pleased to use in his address to Saul on the road to Damascus: "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."^x

The furrows are extremely shallow, but so remarkably straight, although of great length, that one would imagine they had used a line in tracing them. This allusion seems to be involved in the Psalmist's complaint: "The ploughers ploughed upon my back, and made long their furrows."^y

^u Nat. Hist. lib. xviii, cap. 49.

^v Luke ix, 62. Calmet, vol. iii.

^w Buckingham's Trav. vol. i, p. 91.

^x Acts ix, v.

^y Psa. cxxix, 3.

The plough was sometimes used in measuring land, by the Greeks and orientals; for Homer, speaking of contending chiefs, has this expression:

Αλλ' ὅτι δὴ ρ' ἀπην, ὅσον τ' ἐπιουρα πέλονται

Ἡμιονων.

Iliad, lib. x, l. 351.

“But when they were now so distant from each other, as the furrows of two teams of mules.” To explain the comparison, it is necessary to state, that the Grecians did not plough in the manner now in use. They first broke up the ground with oxen,^z and then ploughed it more lightly with mules. When they employed two ploughs in a field, they measured the space they could plough in a day; and at the two ends of that space set their ploughs, which proceeded towards each other. This intermediate space was constantly fixed, but less in proportion for two ploughs of oxen than for two of mules, because oxen are slower, and the toil more in a field that has not yet been turned up; whereas mules are naturally swifter, and make greater speed in a ground that has already had the first ploughing.^a We discover a trace of the same custom in the first book of Samuel, where the historian, describing the valorous exploit of Jonathan, observes; “And that first slaughter which Jonathan and his armour-bearer made, was about twenty men, within as it were a half acre of land which a yoke of oxen might plough.”^b

After the operation of ploughing was finished, they were under the necessity of breaking the clods in clayey soils, and levelling the surface. This treatment, Virgil recommends to the cultivators of the age in which he flourished. He too, said the didactic bard, greatly improves the lands, who breaks the sluggish clods with har-

^z Hesiod. *Opera et Dies*. l. 429, 436, 468. Varro *de Re Rust.* lib. i, cap. 10.

^a Madame Dacier's Note *in loc.*

^b 1 Sam. xiv, 14.

rows, and drags osier hurdles over them ; and he also, who after the plain has once been torn, again breaks through the land that raises up its ridges, turning the plough across, and vexes it with frequent exercise, and rules his lands imperiously.^w It was in the same way that the Israelitish husbandman subdued the stubborn soil of his native land. “ Doth the ploughman plough all day,” rather, plough continually, said Isaiah, “ doth he open and break the clods of his ground ? When he hath made plain the face of it, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat, and the appointed barley and the rye, in their place ? ”^x And shall the God of wisdom be always uttering his judgments, and warning his people ; shall he be always proceeding with his work, and never bring it to a conclusion ? No : He will at length execute his threatenings, and correct them for their sins ; but not with indiscriminate severity ; he will punish them in wisdom, and in proportion to their strength, not that they may be destroyed, but reclaimed from their vicious courses.

“ For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him.” That we owe the knowledge of agriculture, the most useful, and the most necessary of all human sciences, to the suggestion of heaven, is a sentiment which has been entertained by all nations. Virgil ascribes it to the divine intelligence, that mortals exchanged Chaonian maste, for fattening ears of corn, and mingled draughts of achelous with the invented juice of the grape :

— “ vestro si munere tellus

Chaoniam pingui glandem mutavit arista,

Poculaque inventis Acheloïa miscuit uvis.” *Geor. lib. i, l. 7.*

^w *Georg. lib. i, l. 94.* ^x *Isa. xxviii, 24.*

This idea was also cherished by the Greeks, inculcated by their philosophers, and sung by their poets.^y The Jewish writers, instructed by the pen of inspiration, are not less clear and precise; with this important difference, that they ascribe the art to the suggestion of the true God. “The most High hath ordained husbandry,” saith the son of Sirach, *Ecclus. vii. 15.*

The light of nature thus accords with the dictates of revelation, in ascribing to the goodness of the only wise God, the knowledge of this important art. It is he who gives the husbandman that wisdom and discretion, activity and perseverance, which the successful prosecution of his business requires; he plants the inclination in his bosom; he imparts the delight which sweetens his unceasing toil; he crowns his exertions with success. Happy for the cultivator, were his eye continually directed to the source of all his blessings; were he disposed with filial reverence, to depend on the divine wisdom and goodness, and thankfully to acknowledge the kindness and condescension of his instructor.

The oriental husbandman is compelled, by the extreme heat of the climate, to prosecute his labours in the field, almost in a state of nudity. The ardour with which the farmer urged his labour, even under the milder sky of Italy, required the same precaution. “Plough naked, and sow naked,” said Virgil; “Winter is an inactive time for the hind:”

“*Nudus ara, sere nudus: hiems ignava colono.*”

Geor. lib. i, l. 299.^z

^y See Aratus; *ἑ δηπριον ανθροποισι*, &c.

^z Hesiod gives the same direction to the husbandmen of Greece, and for the same reason: “Sow naked, plough naked, reap also naked, if you wish to do your work perfectly.” *Opera et Dies. l. 391, 392.*

Aurelius Victor informs us, that the Roman messengers, who were sent to Cincinnatus, from Atenutius, the consul, whom he had delivered from a siege, found him ploughing naked, beyond the Tiber. But the truth is, neither the Syrian nor Italian husbandman, pursued his labours in the field, entirely naked, but only stripped off his upper garments. An oriental was said to be naked, when these were laid aside. This enables us to understand the meaning of the charge, which our Lord gave his disciples: "Neither let him who is in the field, return back to take his clothes."^a The Israelitish peasant, when he proceeded to his work in the field, was accustomed to strip off his upper garments, and leave them behind in the house, and to resume them when his task was finished.

The various kinds of grain, which they commonly sow in the Holy Land, are frequently mentioned in the sacred volume; and the correctness of the statement is attested by modern historians. Oats are not cultivated near Aleppo; but Dr. Russel observed some fields of them about Antioch, and on the sea coast. The horses are fed universally with barley; but lucern is also cultivated for their use, in the spring. The earliest wheat is sown about the middle of October; other grain, among which are barley, rye, and Indian millet, continue to be sown till the end of January; and barley, even so late as the end of February.

In Italy, they used "harrows of unwieldy weight;" besides Arbutie hurdles.^b These, the didactic bard advises his countrymen to ply, while the ground is unmoistened with showers, and the clouds are yet suspended:

"Tempus humo tegere, et jamdudum incumbere rastris
Dum sicca tellure licet, dum nubila pendent." *Geor. i, l. 13.*

^a Matth. xxiv, 18.

^b *Geor. lib. i, l. 164.*

The Persian harrow consists of a large rake which is fastened to a pole and drawn by oxen.^c In Hindostan, it is like an ordinary rake with three or four teeth, and is drawn by two oxen.^d Similar to this was probably the Syrian harrow. But in Palestine, the harrow is seldom used, the grain being covered by repassing the plough along the edge of the furrow ; and in places where the soil is sandy, they first sow, and then plough the seed into the ground.^e It appears, from the prophecies of Isaiah, that besides the more valuable kinds of grain, several aromatic seeds were sown ; as the sesamum, coriander, and cummin. These, the orientals sprinkled upon their bread, to give it a more agreeable flavour. Rice is trodden into the ground by the feet of oxen ; a practice seemingly alluded to by the prophet, in these words : “ Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass.”^f This, according to Chardin, answers exactly the manner of planting rice : for they sow it upon the waters ; and before sowing, while the earth is covered with water, they cause the ground to be trodden by oxen, horses, and asses, to prepare it for receiving the seed. As they sow the rice on the water, so they transplant in the water ; for the roots of this plant must be kept continually moist, to bring the rice to maturity.^g

An Israelite was forbidden, by the law of Moses, to sow his field with mingled seeds. Maimonides discovered a particular reason for this precept, in the idolatrous cus-

^c Morier's Trav. vol. i, p. 301.

^d Forbes's Orient. Mem. vol. i, p. 194.

^e Russel's Hist. of Aleppo, vol. i, p. 73. Buckingham says, the seed in Palestine is not covered by harrowing as in Europe.” Trav. vol. i, p. 224.

^f Isa. xxxii, 20.

^g See also Sonnini's Trav. in Egypt, p. 145, and Diodorus Sicul. lib. i, cap. 36, p. 42, 43.

toms of the ancient Zabii, who not only sowed different seeds, and grafted trees of different kinds upon each other, in certain aspects of the planets, and with certain fumigations, but also used abominable practices at the moment of incision. The existence of these impure and idolatrous rites, he proves from a book, concerning the incision of an olive into a citron; and doubts not, that God forbade the people to sow with mingled seed, that he might root out the detestable idolatry and unnatural lusts, which abounded in those times. The person who was guilty of transgressing this law, in the opinion of the Jews, incurred the penalty of flagellation. To prevent this, on the first day of the month Adar, a proclamation was made, that every one should go forth to his field, and clear it of all heterogeneous plants which they happened to find; and on the fifteenth of the same month, the magistrates sent messengers through the country, to see that their orders had been executed.

The seed-time is attended with considerable danger to the husbandman, in Palestine and Syria; for, although the more peaceful Arabs apply themselves to agriculture, to supply their families with grain, many of the same wandering race choose rather to procure the corn which they want by violence, than by tillage. So precarious are the fruits of the earth in Palestine, that the farmer is often seen sowing, accompanied by an armed friend, to prevent his being robbed of the seed.^h These vexatious, and often desolating incursions, are described by the prophet in

^h Harmer's *Observ.* vol. i, p. 142. Volney's *Trav.* vol. ii, p. 273.—The Arabian husbandmen in Palestine in all their occupations continue to be armed, partly because it is the fashion of the country, and partly to defend themselves against the occasional inroads of roving bands of freebooters from the neighbouring deserts. Buckingham's *Trav.* vol. ii, p. 116.

the following remarkable terms, when he denounced the judgments of God against the descendants of Ammon : “ Behold, therefore, I will deliver thee to the men of the east for a possession, and they shall set their palaces in thee, and make their dwellings in thee : they shall eat thy fruit, and they shall drink thy milk.”ⁱ The practice of robbing the sower in the field, seems to have been very ancient ; and is perhaps alluded to, by the Psalmist, when he encourages the righteous man, to persevere in working out his salvation, in spite of the dangers to which he is exposed, by the complete success, which in due time shall assuredly crown his endeavours. “ They that sow in tears,” on account of the danger from the lurking and unfeeling Arabian, “ shall reap in joy.” He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.”^j It is much more natural to suppose, that these verses refer to such acts of violence, than to imagine, with all the commentators who have turned their attention to this circumstance, that they allude to the anxiety of a husbandman, who sows his corn in a time of great scarcity, and is afraid his hopes may be disappointed by the failure of the succeeding harvest. We nowhere read, that such fearful anticipations ever produced weeping and lamentation, although the orientals are very prone to violent expressions of grief. But, if we refer the passage to the danger which the farmer in those parts of the world often incurred, of losing his precious seed, the hope of his future subsistence, and even his life, in attempting to defend it, we have an adequate cause for his tears and lamentations. The passage contains a beautiful picture of the success, which, by

ⁱ Ezek. xxv, 4.^j Psa. cxxvi, 5, 6.

the blessing of God, attended the efforts of his chosen people, to return from their captivity to the land of their fathers ; and holds out a powerful encouragement to believers in Christ, to persevere in their heavenly course, notwithstanding the numerous and severe trials of this present life ; for in due time, they shall certainly enter into the rest which remains for the people of God.

But the danger of the husbandman is not over with the seed-time ; the Arabians often seize and carry off the corn, and other fruits of the earth, even before they have come to maturity. Egmont and Hayman, in their travels in Galilee, found a large plain bordering on the lake of Tiberias, which was sown with rice ; but to which they perceived the Arabs had already paid a visit, although the greater part of the corn was not then ripe.^k They treat the fruit trees in the same manner ; which obliges the inhabitants of those countries to watch their corn-fields and orchards, or gather their fruits before they come to maturity. Maillet ascribes the deterioration of the wines, in some parts of Egypt, to their precipitation in gathering the grapes, to save them from the depredations of the Arabs.^l These circumstances lead to an easy and beautiful exposition of the promise, “ Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that the ploughman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed ; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt ;”^m that is, the days shall come, when the grain shall not be cut, nor the grapes gathered, as they were before, in a state of immaturity, for fear of the Arabian freebooters, or other plundering hordes ; but they

^k Trav. vol. ii, p. 37.

^l Let. viii, p. 294, 295.

^m Amos ix, 13.

shall be suffered to remain till the time of ploughing, so perfect shall be the security of those times."ⁿ

Two bushels and an half of wheat or barley, are sufficient to sow as much ground as a pair of beeves will plough in one day ; which is, a little more or less, equal to one of our acres. Dr. Shaw could never learn that Barbary afforded yearly more than one crop ; one bushel yielding ordinarily from eight to twelve, though some districts may perhaps afford a much greater increase, for it is common to see one grain produce ten or fifteen stalks. Even some grains of the Murwany wheat, which he brought with him to Oxford, and sowed in the physic garden, threw out each of them fifty. But Muzeratty, one of the kaleefas, or vice-roys of the province of Tlemsan, brought once with him to Algiers, a root that yielded fourscore, telling Dr. Shaw and his party, that in consequence of a dispute concerning the respective fruitfulness of Egypt and Barbary, the emir Hadge, or prince of the western pilgrims, sent once to the bashaw of Cairo, one that yielded sixscore. Pliny mentions some that bore three or four hundred.^o It likewise happens, that one of these stalks will sometimes bear two ears, whilst each of these ears will as often shoot out into a number of lesser ones, affording by that means a most plentiful increase. And may not these large prolific ears, when seven are said to come up upon one stalk,^p explain what is mentioned of the seven fruitful years in Egypt, that the earth brought *them* forth by handfuls ?^q

It is a common practice in the east, to set the dry herbage on fire before the autumnal rains ; which, for want of care, often occasions great damage. This was also the practice of Italian farmers, as Virgil attests :

ⁿ Harmer's Observ. vol. i, p. 144.

^p Gen. xli, 5.

^o Nat. Hist. lib. xviii, cap. 21.

^q Shaw, vol. i, p. 252.

“ Sæpe etiam steriles incendere proficit agros,
Atque levem stipulam crepitantibus urere flammis.”

Geor. lib. i, l. 84.

As fires of this kind were often very destructive, Moses has provided, by an express law, that reparation shall be made for the damage, whether it was occasioned by malice or neglect. “ If fire,” says the lawgiver, “ break out and catch in thorns, so that the stacks of corn, or the standing corn, or the field be consumed therewith, he that kindled the fire shall surely make restitution.”^r

The season for consuming the dry herbage and under growth on the mountains, is in the latter end of July, when the clouds begin to appear from the south, and indicate the approach of rain. Chandler, from whose Travels this fact is stated, often saw the fire blazing in the winds, and volumes of smoke rolling along the sides of the hills. The necessity of a law to restrain and regulate this very common and dangerous practice, is verified by an incident to which that writer was an eye witness. Having been employed the latter end of August, in taking a plan of Troas, one day after dinner, a Turk coming to them, emptied the ashes of his pipe, and a spark of fire fell unobserved in the grass, which was long parched by the sun, and inflammable as tinder. A brisk wind soon kindled a blaze, which withered in an instant the leaves of the bushes and trees in its way, seized the branches and roots, and devoured all before it, with prodigious crackling and noise. Chandler and his party were much alarmed, as a general conflagration of the country seemed likely to ensue. After exerting themselves for an hour, they at length extinguished the fire. This incident shews, that the law was not only proper, but also necessary, to

^r Exod. xxii, 6.

secure the inhabitants of a scorching climate, where every combustible substance is always near the point of ignition, from utter destruction.^s

Three months intervened between the seed-time and the first reaping, and a month between this and the full harvest. Barley is in full ear all over the Holy land, in the beginning of April; and about the middle of the same month, it begins to turn yellow, particularly in the southern districts; being as forward near Jericho in the latter end of March, as it is in the plains of Acre a fortnight afterwards. The reaping continues till the middle of Sivan, or till about the end of May or beginning of June, which is the time of wheat harvest, finishes this part of the husbandman's labours.

The heats in the time of harvest, appear to be very oppressive, and if not carefully guarded against, sometimes prove fatal to those that are exposed in the open air. It was on a harvest day, that the Shunamite's son was struck with a sun-beam, and died in a few hours. In Egypt, the harvest commences in the latter end of April, or the first days of May, two months which Maillet represents as extremely hot.^t Dr. Pococke affirms, that Egypt is favoured with a double seed-time and harvest. Rice and Indian wheat are not sown and reaped at the same time with wheat, barley, and flax. The first are sown in March, before the Nile overflows the lands, and reaped about October; the wheat and barley are sown in November and December, as soon as the Nile is gone off, and reaped before May.^u Pococke's account has since been confirmed by Hasselquist, who found the rice at Assotta about three

^s Trav. p. 30, 31, 276.

^t Let. xi, p. 109, 110.

^u Trav. vol. i, p. 204.

inches high, on the thirtieth of May ; and in another passage, mentions the month of October as the time of reaping it ; which accords with the statement of Pococke.^v But Dr. Shaw seems not to have been aware of this ; for he supposes that rice was sown at the same time with flax, wheat, and barley ; yet it is natural to suppose, that as wheat and barley are sown as soon as the inundation is over, and reaped before it returns, so, in like manner, those sorts of grain that require much water, should be sown before it begins, and reaped just about the time of its termination.^w Norden accordingly saw a great plain covered with Turkey wheat, nearly ripe, upon the twentieth of November ; and upon the twenty-ninth of the same month, the Arabs cutting their harvest in a neighbouring plain. This fact accounts for the safety of the wheat and the rye, when Egypt was desolated by the plague of hail ; they were involved in thick darkness, as the word literally signifies ; that is, they were concealed, or, as our translators have justly rendered the term, they were not grown up. Parkhurst, following Dr. Shaw, gives a different translation : “ But the wheat and the rye were not smitten, for they were (אפילו) aphiloth, hidden, that is, concealed or involved in the hose.” To the same purpose, the Seventy render it σφικτα, Vulg. serotina, late, backward. This was about the beginning of the month Abib, which answers nearly to our March, O. S. ; and accordingly Dr. Shaw, speaking of Egypt, says, “ Barley and wheat are usually ripe, the first about the beginning, the latter at the end of April.” And again, “ Now as wheat and rice are of a slower growth than flax and barley, it usually falls out in the beginning of March that the barley is in the ear,

^v Trav. part ii, p. 17, 36.

^w Trav. vol. ii, p. 265.

and the flax is bolled when the wheat and the rice are not as yet grown up, or begin only to spindle." In the plague of hail, therefore, the stalks of barley, become pretty hard and stiff, resisted its violence, and so were broken off; whereas the wheat stalks being tender and flexible, gently yielded to the stroke of the hail, and so eluding its violence, preserved the wheat in the hose. But Mr. Harmer's view is preferable; for it is evident from the text, that this terrible calamity came upon them towards the time of barley harvest; which enables us to form a judgment of the month when it happened. We are told by modern travellers, that corn in Egypt is fit for reaping in March and April; that is, the barley comes to maturity first, and is cut down in the former month, and the wheat in the latter. When Le Bruyn was in that country, the whole harvest was over at Cairo, upon the nineteenth of April.^x This agrees with the account given by the sacred writer, who says that the barley was in the ear, though, as is intimated, not quite fit to be mowed; but "the wheat and the rye were not grown up." This judgment, therefore, must have happened about the beginning of March, before the precise time of harvest.^y But, according to Pococke, Indian wheat and rice are sown in March, before the Nile overflows the lands, and reaped about October. But the wheat that is sown in March, cannot be grown up, much less begun to spindle, in that month; it must still be involved in deep darkness, or still concealed under the surface. The wheat of which Dr. Shaw speaks, must be the bearded kind, which is sown in Egypt nearly about the same time with barley, and is usually ripe at the end of April; but the sacred historian alludes to quite a dif-

^x Trav. p. 134, b. See also Maillet, Let. ix, p. 7.

^y See Bryant on the Plagues of Egypt, p. 117.

ferent species, which had not appeared above ground when the plague of hail descended, and so escaped its ravages.^z

The reapers in Palestine and Syria make use of the sickle, in cutting down their crops, and according to the present custom in this country, “fill their hand” with the corn, and those who bind up the sheaves, their “bosom.”^a When the crop is thin and short, which is generally the case in light soils, and with their imperfect cultivation, it is not reaped with the sickle, but plucked up by the root with the hand. By this mode of reaping, they leave the most fruitful fields as naked as if nothing had ever grown on them; and as no hay is made in the east, this is done, that they may not lose any of the straw, which is necessary for the sustenance of their cattle.^b The practice of reaping with the hand, is perhaps involved in these words of the Psalmist, to which reference has already been made: “Let them be as the grass upon the house tops, which withereth afore it groweth up; where-with the mower filleth not his hand, nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom.” The tops of the houses in Judea are flat, and being covered with plaister of terrace, are frequently grown over with grass. As it is but small and weak, and from its elevation exposed to the scorching sun, it is soon withered. To prevent this, they pluck it up for the use of their cattle, with the hand. A more beautiful and striking figure, to display the weak and evanescent condition of wicked men, cannot easily be conceived.

^z Harmer's Observ. vol. iv, p. 10, 11.

^a Psa. cxxix, 7. Ruth ii, 5.—They used the same instrument in Italy, as we know from Varro, de Re Rust. lib. i, cap. 50; and Columella, lib. ii, cap. 21.

^b Maundrell's Journey, p. 144. Russel's Hist. of Aleppo, vol. i, p. 75.

They are every moment exposed to the judgments of God, like the grass on the house top, which is tossed by the breeze, and scorched by the sun, and to the grasp of omnipotence, which weak and defenceless as they are, they can neither avoid nor resist. The sudden destruction of the wicked is described by the same writer, under another figure not less remarkable for its force and propriety : “ I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself, like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not ; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.”^c

The reapers go to the field very early in the morning, and return home betimes in the afternoon. They carry provisions along with them, and leathern bottles, or dried bottle gourds, filled with water. They are followed by their own children, or by others, who glean with much success ; for a great quantity of corn is scattered in the reaping, and in their manner of carrying it.^d

The greater part of these circumstances, are discernible in the manners of the ancient Israelites. Ruth had not proposed to Naomi, her mother-in-law, to go to the field, and glean after the reapers ; nor had the servant of Boaz, to whom she applied for leave, so readily granted her request, if gleaning had not been a common practice in that country. When Boaz inquired who she was, his overseer, after informing him, observes, that she came out to the field in the morning ; and that the reapers left the field early in the afternoon, as Dr. Russel states, is evident from this circumstance, that Ruth had time to beat out her gleanings before evening. They carried water and provisions with them ; for Boaz invited her to come and drink

^c Psa. xxxvii, 35. Isa. xxxvii, 27. See Dr. Clarke's Trav. in Palestine, vol. v, p. 108.

^d Russel's Hist. vol. i, p. 75.

of the water which the young men had drawn ; and at meal-time, to eat of the bread, and dip her morsel in the vinegar. And so great was the simplicity of manners in that part of the world, and in those times, that Boaz himself, although a prince of high rank in Judah, sat down to dinner, in the field with his reapers, and helped Ruth with his own hand. Nor ought we to pass over in silence, the mutual salutation of Boaz and his reapers, when he came to the field, as it strongly marks the state of religious feeling in Israel at the time, and furnishes another proof of the artless, the happy, and unsuspecting simplicity, which characterized the manners of that highly favoured people. “ And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The Lord be with you. And they answered him, the Lord bless thee.”^e Such a mode of salutation continued among that people till the coming of Christ ; for the angel saluted Mary in language of similar import : “ Hail, highly favoured, the Lord is with thee ; blessed art thou among women.”^f

It appears from the beautiful story of Ruth, that in Palestine, the women lent their assistance in cutting down and gathering in the harvest ; for Boaz commands her to keep fast by his maidens :—the women in Syria shared also in the labours of the harvest ; for Dr. Russel informs us, they sang the *Ziraleet*, or song of thanks, when the passing stranger accepted their present of a handful of corn, and made a suitable return.^g It was another custom among the Jews, to set a confidential servant over the reapers, to see that they executed their work properly, that they had suitable provisions, and to pay them their

^e Ruth ii, 4.

^f Luke i, 28.

^g Russel's Hist. of Aleppo, vol. i, p. 140, 383.

wages ; the Chaldees call him Rab, the master, ruler, or governor of the reapers. Such was the person who directed the labours of the reapers in the field of Boaz.

The right of the poor in Israel to glean after the reapers, was secured by a positive law, couched in these words : “ And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy land ; neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard ; thou shalt leave them for the poor and the stranger ; I am the Lord your God.”^h It is the opinion of some writers, that although the poor were allowed the liberty of gleaning, the Israelitish proprietors, were not obliged to admit them immediately into the field, as soon as the reapers had cut down the corn, and bound it up in sheaves, but when it was carried off ; they might choose also among the poor, whom they thought most deserving, or most necessitous. These opinions receive some countenance, from the request which Ruth presented to the servant of Boaz, to permit her to glean “ among the sheaves ;” and from the charge of Boaz to his young men, “ let her glean even among the sheaves ;” a mode of speaking which seems to insinuate, that though they could not legally hinder Ruth from gleaning in the field, they had a right, if they chose to exercise it, to prohibit her from gleaning among the sheaves, or immediately after the reapers.

Rich and abundant as the harvests of Canaan generally were, the hopes of the husbandman were sometimes disappointed. The desolating storm and tempest not unfrequently received from incensed heaven, a commission, when gentler means had been tried in vain, to sweep the

^h Lev. xix, 9.

fields of an ungrateful or idòlatrous people, and scatter destruction over the ripening harvests. To punish the stubborn heart of Pharaoh, who refused to let the people of Israel go, “ the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground ; and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt, since it became a nation. And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt, all that was in the field, both man and beast ; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field ; and the flax and the barley were smitten ; for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was balled.”ⁱ This, it must be admitted, was an extraordinary visitation ; yet it differs but little from the description of the storms which occasionally desolate the harvests of Italy, from the pen of Virgil : “ Often have I seen when the farmer had just brought the reaper into the yellow fields, and was now binding up the barley with the brittle straw, often have I seen all the fierceness of the winds combine, which far and wide tore up the full loaded corn from the lowest roots, and tossed it up on high : just so with blackening whirlwind, a wintry storm would drive light straw, and flying stubble.”^j Such is the calamity which Jehovah threatened to inflict upon his rebellious people : “ Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength ; therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants, and shalt set it with strange slips ; in the day shalt thou make thy plant to grow, and in the morning shalt thou make thy seed to flourish ; but the harvest shall be a heap in

ⁱ Exod. ix, 24

Geor. lib. i, l. 316, &c.

the day of grief, and of desperate sorrow.”^k The harvests of Canaan were exposed to the ravages of another enemy still more destructive; this was the locust, which, in overwhelming numbers invaded the country, and with insatiable greediness, devoured every green thing; but the ravages of this terrible insect have been already described. But these were only occasional visitations; the God of nature, who, remembering his covenant with the seed-time and the harvest, blessed the springing of the earth, for the most part crowned the year with his goodness, filled the barns of his chosen people with plenty, and caused their presses burst out with new wine.^l

When the corn is reaped, it is carried on asses to the summit of the nearest rising ground or hill, where it is laid in a heap on a spot prepared for the purpose.^m The thrashing floor is carefully levelled with a huge cylindric roller, and wrought with the hand, and consolidated with chalk, that weeds may not spring up, and that it may not chap with drought. Such is the method which Virgil, in his first Georgic, recommended to the Italian farmer, and which he probably borrowed from the Grecian or eastern cultivator.ⁿ

In Palestine, as in Greece and Italy, the floor was for the most part in the open air. Thus the thrashing floor of Gideon appears to have been an open uncovered space, upon which the dews of heaven fell without interruption: “I will put a fleece of wool in the floor, and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry on all the earth be-

^k Isa. xvii, 10, 11.

^l Prov. iii, 10.

^m Hesiod. Scutum Herc. l. 290, 291.

ⁿ Iliad, lib. xx, l. 495. Varro de Re Rust. lib. i, cap. 51. Columella de Re Rust. lib. ii, cap. 20.

side, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand as thou hast said.”^o But a barn, or covered space, had been unfit for such an experiment. The thrashing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, seems also to have been an open area, else it had not been a proper place for erecting an altar, and offering sacrifice. In the prophecies of Hosea, the idolaters of Israel are compared to the chaff that is driven with the whirlwind out of the floor.^p Hence it was designedly prepared in a place to which the wind had free access on all sides; and from this exposed situation it derived its name in Hebrew. In Greece, the same kind of situation was chosen; for Hesiod advises his farmer to thrash his corn in a place well exposed to the wind.^q From this statement, it appears that a thrashing floor (rendered in our translation a void place) might well be formed near the gate of Samaria, which was built on the summit of a hill; and afford a very convenient place for the kings of Israel and Judah giving audience to the prophets.^r

The method of thrashing out the grain, varied according to the species. Isaiah mentions four different instruments, the flail, the drag, the wain, and the feet of the ox. The staff, or flail, was used for the smaller seeds, which were too tender to be treated in the other methods. The drag consisted of a sort of strong planks, made rough at the bottom with hard stones or iron; it was drawn by oxen, or horses, over the corn sheaves spread on the floor, the driver sitting upon it. The wain, or cart, was much

^o Judg. vi, 37.

^p Hos. xiii, 3.

^q Hesiod. Opera et Dies. l. 598, 599, 1806. And Varro gives the same advice to the Roman farmer. De Re Rust. lib. i, cap. 51.

^r See 1 Kings xxii, 10; and 2 Chron. xviii, 9.

like the former, but had wheels, with iron teeth or edges like a saw. From the statement of different authors, it would seem that the axle was armed with iron teeth, or serrated wheels throughout. Niebuhr gives a description and print of such a machine, used at present in Egypt for the same purpose; it moves upon three rollers, armed with iron teeth or wheels to cut the straw.^s In Syria, they make use of the drag, constructed in the very same manner as before described. This not only forced out the grain, but also cut the straw in pieces, which is used in this state over all the east as fodder for the cattle. Virgil also mentions the slow rolling wains of the Eleusinian mother, the planks and sleds for pressing out the corn, and harrows of unweildy weight:

“Tardaque Eleusinae matris volventia plaustra,
Tribulaque, traheæque, et iniquo pondere ratri.”

Geor. lib. i, l. 164.

The Israelitish farmer, endowed with discretion from above, made use of all these instruments in separating from the chaff the various produce of his fields: “For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him. For the fitches are not thrashed with a thrashing instrument, neither is a cart wheel turned about upon the cummin; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod. Bread corn is bruised; because he will not ever be thrashing it, nor break it with the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it with his horsemen. This also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working.”^t In the early

^s Voyage en Arabie, Tab. xvii, p. 123; et Description, &c. p. 140. See also Varro de Re Rust. lib. i, cap. 50 and 52; and Columella de Re Rust. lib. ii, cap. 21.

^t Isa. xxviii, 26, 27, 28.

periods of the Jewish commonwealth, however, these various methods, adapted to the different kinds of grain, were unknown; the husbandman employed the staff, or flail, in thrashing all his crop. When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he found him thrashing wheat by the wine press with a staff, for so the original term (חֹבֵט) signifies; and after Ruth had gleaned in the field till the evening, she beat out with a staff (וַיַּחֲבֹט) what she had gleaned. The Seventy render the verb in both passages, by the Greek word *μαρμαίρειν*, to beat with a rod; but the natural sagacity of the human mind, directed by the finger of God, at last invented the other more efficacious implements, to which Isaiah so frequently refers in the course of his writings. He compares Moab, in the day of their overthrow, to straw which is trodden down under the wain;^u and he promises to furnish his oppressed people with the same powerful instrument, which we translate a new sharp thrashing instrument having teeth, that they may thrash the mountains, and beat them small, and make the hills as chaff; or dropping the metaphor, he promises them complete victory over their numerous and powerful enemies, who should be given by the Lord of hosts as driven stubble to their bow, and swept away before the armies of Israel as chaff before the whirlwinds of the south.

But one of the most common methods of thrashing employed in the east, was by the feet of oxen, or other beasts of burden. The law of Moses, with its characteristic benevolence and attention to the feelings even of the lower animals, provides for the sustenance and comfort of the ox, when engaged in this laborious service, by an express

^u Isa. xxv, 10.

enactment: "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox, when he treadeth out the corn;"^v and to this day, the cattle employed in the Syrian harvest are left unmuzzled at the heap, to feed at will on the bounties of nature, which their labour serves to procure. The prophet Jeremiah complains, that Chaldea had been enriched by the spoils of Israel, and had become fat as a heifer (רשה) treading out the corn;^w and Hosea compares the people of Israel to "an heifer that is taught, and loveth to tread out the corn."^x Nor can a doubt be entertained that Jehovah alludes to this custom in his invitation to the church: "Arise and thrash, O daughter of Zion, for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass; and thou shalt beat in pieces many people; and I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth."^y We learn from Cyril of Alexandria, that the Egyptians, having carried their sheaves from the field into the thrashing floor, send in oxen upon them, and lead them round to tread out the corn with their hoofs. This custom was followed in Greece from the earliest times, as Homer attests:

Ὡς δ' ὅτε τις ζευξή βοας ἀρσενας ευρυμωπας, &c. *Il. lib. xx, l. 495.*

"As when one joins bulls with broad foreheads in the yoke, that in the circular area they may tread out the white barley, and under the feet of the lowing oxen, the grain may instantly become small." It was still the practice of the Greeks, in the time of Xenophon, who says that cattle tread out the corn when they are stimulated; and further, that persons are appointed to conduct the oxen, to turn the sheaves, and subject those which are not sufficiently

^v Deut. xxv, 4.

^w Jer. l, 11.

^x Hos. x, 11.

^y Micah iv, 13.

trodden again to the feet of the cattle, that the more refractory spikes may be equally thrashed, and the whole work more speedily accomplished. In modern Turkey, the custom of treading out the corn by oxen is still practised.^z This is a much quicker way than our method of beating out the corn with the flail, but less cleanly ; for, as it is performed in the open air, upon any round level plat of ground, daubed over with cow dung, to prevent as much as possible the earth, sand, or gravel from rising, a great quantity of them all, notwithstanding these precautions, must unavoidably be taken up with the grain ; at the same time the straw, which is their only fodder, is by this means shattered to pieces.^a To this circumstance the sacred historian alludes, with great force and propriety, in his brief description of the wretched state to which the kingdom of the ten tribes had been reduced by the arms of Hazael king of Syria : “ Neither did he leave of the people to Jehoa-haz but fifty horsemen, and ten chariots, and ten thousand footmen ; for the king of Syria had destroyed them, and had made them like the dust by thrashing.”^b

After the grain is trodden out, they winnow it by throwing it up against the wind with a shovel ; the *το πλυνον* of the gospels according to Mathew and Luke, there rendered a fan, which is too cumbersome a machine to be intended by the evangelist.^c The text should rather run, whose shovel or fork, the *οεργαρον οδοντικον*, (which is a portable instrument) is in his hand, agreeably to the practice recorded by Isaiah, who mentions both the shovel and the

^z Lady Montagu's Letters, vol. i, p. 196.

^a Lowth on Isaiah, vol. ii, p. 162, 192, 204.

^b 2 Kings xiii, 7. Shaw's Trav. vol. i, p. 255.

^c Columella de Re Rust. lib. ii, cap. 21.

fan: "The oxen likewise, and the young asses that ear the ground, shall eat clean provender, which hath been winnowed with the shovel and with the fan."^d

The image of thrashing is frequently used by the Hebrew poets with great elegance and effect, to express the punishments of wicked, and the trials of righteous men, or the utter dispersion and ruin of those who continue in their sins. "How often," cried Job, "is the candle of the wicked put out? And how oft cometh their destruction upon them? God distributeth sorrows in his anger. They are as stubble before the wind, and as chaff that the storm carrieth away."^e The Psalmist uses the same figure, in the first Psalm: "The ungodly are not so; but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away." To finish the picture of entire dispersion, the prophet Isaiah joins with it another figure equally beautiful and striking, taken from the cloud of very small dust, which rises from the thrashing floor by the action of the machines, or the feet of the cattle, and is so light and attenuated that it is dispersed by the gentlest breath of wind. "Moreover, the multitude of thy strangers shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones shall be as chaff that passeth away; yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly."^f In another passage, he addresses his nation in these encouraging terms: "Thou shalt thrash the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them."^g The prophet Hosea warned his people, that if they turned aside to the worship of false gods, they "should be as the morning cloud and

^d Shaw's Trav. vol. i, p. 255. Isa. xxx, 24.

^f Isa. xxix, 5.

^e Job xxi, 18.

^g Isa. xli, 15.

as the early dew, which passeth away ; as the chaff that is driven with the whirlwind out of the floor, and as the smoke out of the chimney.”^h Alluding to the same circumstance, the prophet Daniel compares the broken pieces of Nebuchadnezzar’s image, to the chaff of the summer thrashing floor carried away by the wind.

These circumstances clearly illustrate some of the details in the book of Ruth. Boaz, for example, was a person of considerable wealth and high rank in the tribe of Judah, for he was descended in a direct line from Naason, the prince of that powerful family ; yet he seems, after the fatigues of the day, to have laid himself down to sleep on the barn floor, an area in the open air at some distance from his dwelling, at the end of the heap of barley which he had been winnowing ; such was the simplicity of manners in those days, even among the nobles of Judah. The custom has descended to present times ; for the Persian villagers also pass the night at their thrashing floors in the fields.^j

As the sheep-shearing was enlivened with rural festivities in the east, so was the thrashing out and winnowing of the corn ; for Naomi directs her daughter-in-law to wash and anoint herself, and put on her raiment, and go down to the floor, but not to make herself known to the man, till he should have done eating and drinking ; and accordingly, it is noted in a following verse, “ That when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn.” Such entertainments were, perhaps, different from the feast of ingathering, which closed the labours of the year ; for in Palestine, the barley harvest is ten days or a fortnight be-

^h Hos. xiii, 3.

^j Memoir of Mr. Martyn, p. 401.

fore the wheat harvest, and therefore this feast could not be the feast of ingathering, but a previous entertainment. The ancient Romans, in like manner, were accustomed to sing a hymn to Ceres before putting the sickle to the corn; and when the harvest was gathered in, they every where resigned themselves to joy and singing.^j

After the grain is winnowed, they lodge it in subterraneous magazines, as was formerly the custom of other nations; two or three hundred of these receptacles are sometimes to be found together, the smallest holding four hundred bushels.^k These grottoes are dug in the form of an oven, gradually enlarging towards the bottom, with one round opening at top; and this being close shut when the magazine is full, is covered over with earth, so as to remain perfectly concealed from an enemy. These magazines are sometimes discovered in the midst of a ploughed field; sometimes on the verge, and even in the middle of the highway. The same kind of granaries are used in Palestine as in Syria. Le Bruyn speaks of a number of deep pits at Rama, which he was told were designed for corn:^l and Rauwolf, of three very large vaults at Joppa, where the inhabitants laid up their corn, when he was in that country.^m The treasures in the field, consisting of wheat and of barley, of oil and of honey, which were offered to Ishmael, as a ransom for the lives of his captives, were undoubtedly laid up in the same kind of repositories.ⁿ In dangerous and unsettled times like those of Jeremiah,

^j Geor. lib. i, l. 348.

^k Shaw's Trav. vol. i, p. 255, 256. Russel's Hist. of Aleppo, vol. i, p. 76.

^l Trav. vol. ii, p. 149, 150.

^m Trav. vol. i, p. 227. The same custom is noticed by Varro, de Re Rust. lib. i, cap. 57.

ⁿ Jer. xli, 8.

it is quite common, even at present, for the Arabs to secure their corn and other effects, which they cannot carry along with them, in deep pits or subterraneous grottoes. Sir John Chardin, in a note upon this very passage of the prophet, says, "The eastern people in many places hide their corn in these concealments." To these various customs, the Baptist alludes in his solemn warning to the multitudes concerning Christ: "Whose fan (rather whose shovel) is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but the chaff will he burn with unquenchable fire."ⁿ And our Lord himself, in his parable of the good seed: "Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn."^o

The corn which they reserve for daily use, they keep in long earthen jars; because, when kept in sacks or barrels, it is liable to be eaten by worms. This is confirmed by Norden, who tells us, that when he was travelling in Upper Egypt, one of the natives opened a great jar, in order to shew him how they preserved their corn there. In some regions of the East Indies, the paddy, or rice in the husk, is also preserved in large earthen jars, that are kept in the house; or in small cylindrical stores, which the potters make of clay; the mouth is covered with an inverted pot; and the paddy is drawn out of a hole at the bottom, as it is wanted.^a

It seems to have been in one of these earthen jars, that the woman of Zarephath kept her corn, of which she had only enough left, when the prophet Elijah applied to her

ⁿ Mat. iii, 12. ^o Mat. xiii, 30. Volney's Trav. vol. ii, p. 273.

^p Trav. vol. ii, p. 119. Hesiod also directs the Greeks to preserve their corn in the same way. Opera et Dies. l. 600.

for a morsel of bread, to make an handful of meal. In our translation, the original term (כַּד) chad, is rendered barrel; but a barrel properly speaking, it could not be, because a vessel of that sort is never used for holding corn in those regions. Neither could it be a chest, although this is often used in the east for preserving corn; because the Hebrew term is quite different. In the second book of Kings it is stated, that “Jehoiada the priest took (אֲרוֹן) aron, a chest, and bored a hole in the lid of it, and set it beside the altar.”^a The same word is employed by Moses, to denote a coffin; but most generally, to signify the chest, or ark of the testimony, on which the cherubim stood, in the holy of holies. This term, among the Hebrews, therefore, properly signified a chest made of wood; never a vessel for holding water. But (כַּד) chad they commonly used, to signify a jar or pitcher for holding water; which was made of earth, never of wood. It is the same word in the original, which the sacred historian employs, to denote the vessels in which Gideon’s army concealed their torches, and which they brake with a clashing terrific noise, when they blew with their trumpets. Both these circumstances suppose they were vessels of earth, which are employed in the east, for the double purpose of preserving corn, and holding water. The (כַּד) chad was also the vessel with which Rebecca went out to fetch water from the well; which, in our translation, is rendered pitcher. But the orientals never carried a barrel to the fountain, nor drew water with a wooden vessel. Hence, the barrel in which the woman of Zarephath kept her corn, was in reality, an earthen jar. The four barrels of water then, which Elijah commanded his atten-

^a 2 Kings xii, 9.

dants to pour on the sacrifice,^r should have been translated four jars or pitchers; for the original word is the same in all these instances.^s

In temperate latitudes, the fields are generally covered with durable verdure; but in Asia, gramineous plants of all kinds are extremely perishable. The wonderful rapidity of their growth, is celebrated by every traveller into the east. Sir Thomas Roe says, that when the ground has been destitute of rain nine months together, and looks all of it like the barren sand in the deserts of Arabia, where there is not one spire of green grass to be found, within a few days after those fat enriching showers begin to fall, the face of the earth there (as it were by a new resurrection) is so revived, and throughout so renewed, as that it is presently covered all over with a pure green mantle.^t Dr. Russel, in the same admiring terms, describes the springing of the earth as a resurrection of vegetable nature.^u Vegetation is so extremely quick in Hindostan, that, as fast as the water rises, the plants of rice grow before it, so that the ear is never immersed.^v To the powerful influence of the rain upon the face of oriental nature, Moses compares, with singular beauty and force, the effect which the lessons of heavenly wisdom produce in the human mind: “My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass.”^w Even the dews, which are most copious in those

^r 1 Kings xviii, 33.

^s See Harmer's *Observ.* vol. ii, p. 267, and vol. iv, p. 250; Pococke's *Trav.* vol. ii, p. 61, 62; and Chandler's *Trav.* p. 21.

^t *Voyage to the East Indies*, p. 360.

^u *Hist. of Aleppo*, vol. i, p. 63, &c.

^v *Maurice's Indian Antiq.* vol. i, p. 98.

^w *Deut.* xxxii, 2.

regions, produce a change so beneficial and sudden, that Solomon compares to their energy, the influence of royal favour, which, in oriental courts, frequently raises in one day a person from the lowest condition, to the highest ranks of life: The king's "favour is as a dew upon the grass."^x But such extraordinary quickness of growth is incompatible with strength and permanence; the feeble and sickly blade, yields as quickly to the burning heat, and vanishes away. To this rapid change, the Psalmist compares the short-lived prosperity of wicked men:^y his own evanescent comforts;^z the swift progress of his days,^a and of time in general.^b So soon are the powers of nature exhausted, that the grass does not always come to maturity, even in the best soils; in the language of ancient prophecy, "it is blasted before it be grown up."^c

This may be one reason, that hay is seldom or never made in the east.^d In our version indeed, the Psalmist foretold, that the blessings of the promised Messiah shall come down like rain upon the "mown grass;" and the prophet Amos, describing the judgment of the grasshoppers, expresses himself in this manner: "Thus hath the Lord God shewed unto me; and behold, he formed grasshoppers in the beginning of the shooting up of the latter growth; and, lo, it was the latter growth, after the king's mowings."^e But the contradiction is in our translation, not in the original Scriptures, which perfectly correspond with the fact. The Hebrew terms (גֶז) gez, and (גִּזְזֵה) gizzē, of which the first is rendered in our own version mown, and the last, mowings, come from a root which

^x Prov. xix, 11.^y Psa. xxxvii, 2.^z Psa. cii, 4.^a Verse 11.^b Psa. xc, 5.^c 2 Kings xix, 26. Isa. xxxvii, 27. Psa. cxxix, 6.^d Shaw's Trav. vol. i, p. 254.^e Am. vii, 1.

signifies to take off, or take away; applied to corn or grass, to cut down, or to cut short, particularly by the teeth of animals; it signifies, therefore, to browse or feed; and, in the first instance, seems rather to mean grass that has been eaten down, which is precisely the view given of the word in the Targum, grass eaten down by the locusts; and in the second, may be rendered feedings or grazings, that is, the time, which was probably in March, when the king's cattle were led out to graze in the common pastures of Judea. The vision of Amos represented to him the coming of locusts to eat up the pastures, as soon as the king's horses were withdrawn, and the inhabitants hoped to enjoy the plenty of April and May, before the scorching heat of summer burnt up the grass.^f

If these observations be just, our version of that proverb must be improper: "The *hay* appeareth, and the tender grass sheweth itself, and the herbs of the mountains are gathered."^g The gross impropriety, indeed, appears from the very arrangement imputed to the inspired writer; for, with what justice can hay, which is grass cut and dried after it has come to maturity, be made to precede, or even associated with the tender grass, which is but just beginning to shew itself? It is certainly the design of Solomon in this passage, which is highly poetical, to describe the beautiful progress of vegetation, which must have filled an eastern beholder, whose aching eye had wandered so long over a bare and sterile waste, with equal joy and wonder. Calmet, therefore, proposes another version, which accords at once with the fact stated by travellers, and the purpose of the royal preacher: "*The tender risings of the grass are in motion; and the buddings of*

^f See Harmer's Observ. vol. iv, p. 394.

^g Prov. xxvii, 25.

grass (grass in its early state, as is the peculiar import of נֶשֶׁת דֶּשֶׁה) *appear, and the tufts of grass* proceeding from the same root, *collect themselves* together, and by their union begin *to clothe the mountain tops* with a pleasing verdure.”^f

In the language of the Hebrews, every place where plants and trees were cultivated with greater care than in the open field, was called a garden. The idea of such an enclosure, was certainly borrowed from the garden of Eden, which the bountiful Creator planted for the reception of his favourite creature. The garden of the Hesperides, in eastern fables, was protected by an enormous serpent; and the gardens of Adonis, among the Greeks, may be traced to the same origin; for the terms “*horti Adonides*,” the gardens of Adonis, were used by the ancients to signify gardens of pleasure, which corresponds with the name of Paradise, or the garden of Eden, as *horti Adonis* answers to the garden of the Lord. Besides, the gardens of primitive nations were commonly, if not in every instance, devoted to religious purposes. In these shady retreats were celebrated, for a long succession of ages, the rites of Pagan superstition. Thus Jehovah calls the apostate Jews, “a people that provoked me continually to anger to my face, that sacrificeth in gardens.”^g And in a preceding chapter, the prophet threatens them in the name of the Lord, “They shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded for the gardens which ye have chosen.” The inspired writer not only mentions these gardens, but also makes a clear allusion to the tree of life, or rather of knowledge, both of which were placed in the midst of Paradise:

^f Taylor’s Calmet, vol. iii.

^g Isa. lxxv, 3.

“ They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens, behind one (tree) in the midst, eating swine’s flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the Lord.” The garden of Eden was planted by Jehovah, for the accommodation of the first pair, but chiefly for religious purposes. It was meant as a school of religious instruction, where, in the external and sensible objects around them, and particularly in the seals of his covenant, the tree of knowledge and the tree of life, they might read the character of their God ; might contemplate the variety and loveliness of his perfections, the purity of his nature, the riches of his bounty, the minuteness of his care, the watchfulness of his providence, and the ineffably higher delights which awaited them in his immediate presence, if they persevered in their obedience.

The oriental gardens were either open plantations, or enclosures defended by walls or hedges. Rauwolf found, about Tripoly, many gardens and vineyards, enclosed for the most part with hedges, and separated by shady walks.^h Some fences in the Holy Land, in later times, are not less beautiful than our living fences of white thorn ; and perfectly answer the description of ancient Jewish prophets, who inform us, that the hedges in their times consisted of thorns, and that the spikes of these thorny plants were exceedingly sharp. Doubdan found a very fruitful vineyard, full of olives, fig-trees, and vines, about eight miles southwest from Bethlehem, enclosed with a hedge ; and that part of it adjoining to the road, strongly formed of thorns and rose bushes, intermingled with pomegranate trees of surpassing beauty and fragrance.ⁱ A hedge composed of

^h Trav. p. 21, 22.

ⁱ Voy. dans la Palest. p. 154, 155.

rose bushes and wild pomegranate shrubs, then in full flower, mingled with other thorny plants, adorned in the varied livery of spring, must have made at once a strong and beautiful fence. The wild pomegranate tree, the species probably used in fencing, is much more prickly than the other variety ; and when mingled with other thorny bushes, of which they have several kinds in Palestine, some whose prickles are very long and sharp, must form a hedge very difficult to penetrate. These facts illustrate the beauty and force of several passages in the sacred volume : thus, in the Proverbs of Solomon, “ The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns ;”^j it is obstructed with difficulties, which the sloth and indolence of his temper represent as galling or insuperable ; but which a moderate share of resolution and perseverance, would easily remove or surmount. In the prophecies of Hosea, God threatens his treacherous and idolatrous people with many painful embarrassments and perplexities, which would as effectually retard or obstruct their progress in the paths of wickedness, as a hedge of thorny plants stretching across the traveller’s way, the prosecution of his journey : “ Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall that she shall not find her paths.”^k In the days of Micah, the magistrates of Judah had become exceedingly corrupt : “ the best of them is a brier ; the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge ;” to appear before their tribunal, or to have any dealings with them, was to involve one’s self in endless perplexities, to expose one’s self to galling disappointments, if not to certain destruction. They resembled those thorny plants which are twisted together, whose spines point in every direction,

^j Prov. xv, 19.^k Hos. ii, 6.

and are so sharp and strong, that they cannot be touched without danger, and so entangling, that when the traveller has with much pain and exertion freed himself from one, he is instantly seized by another. “But the sons of Belial,” said the king of Israel, “shall be all of them as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands: But the man that shall touch them, must be fenced with iron, and the staff of a spear; and they shall be utterly burned with fire in the same place.”¹ The armies of Assyria that came up against the kingdom of Judah in the reign of Hezekiah, are compared also to thorns, because they entangled one another, exasperated one another’s passions, inflamed their mutual hatred of God and his chosen people, confirmed their mutual insensibility and hardness of heart; and therefore Jehovah declares, “they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry;” since they cannot be disentangled nor touched with safety, they shall be consumed together, as a thicket of thorny plants in the raging flame.

Other enclosures have fences of loose stones, or mud-walls, some of them very low, which often furnish a retreat to venomous reptiles.^m To this circumstance the royal preacher alludes, in his observations of wisdom and folly: “He that diggeth a pit, shall fall into it: and who-so breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him.”ⁿ The term which our translators render hedge in this passage, they might with more propriety have rendered wall, as they had done in another part of the writings of Solomon: “I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and, lo, it was all grown

¹ 2 Sam. xxiii, 6.

ⁿ Eccl. x, 8

^m Doubdan Voy. p. 154, 155; and Rauwolf, p. 236.

over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down.”^o

The land of promise has been from the earliest ages an unenclosed country, with a few spots defended by a hedge of thorny plants, or a stone wall built without any cement. At Aleppo, most of the vineyards are fenced with stone walls; for in many parts of Syria, a hedge would not grow for want of moisture. But, as their various esculent vegetables are now not unfrequently planted in the open fields, both in Syria and Palestine, so Chardin, in his manuscript, seems to suppose they were often unfenced in ancient times; and on this account, those lodges and booths, to which Isaiah refers, in the first chapter of his prophecy, were built. In Hindostan they follow the same custom. “At the commencement of the rainy season, the peasants plant abundance of melons, cucumbers, and gourds, which are then the principal food of the inhabitants. They are planted in the open fields and extensive plains, and are therefore liable to the depredations of men and beasts. In the centre of the field is an artificial mount with a hut on the top, sufficiently large to shelter a single person from the inclemency of the weather. There amid heavy rains and tempestuous winds, a poor solitary being is stationed day and night to protect the crop. From thence he gives an alarm to the nearest village. Few situations can be more unpleasant than a hovel of this kind, exposed for three or four months to wind, lightning, and rain. To such a cheerless station the prophet, no doubt, alludes in that passage where he declares the desolations of Judah: “The daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers.”^p If such watch houses were necessary in those

^o Prov. xxiv, 30.

^p Isa. i, 8. Forbes's Orient. Mem. vol. ii, p. 450.

gardens which were defended by walls or hedges, some of which, indeed, it was not difficult to get over, they must have been still more necessary, in those which were perfectly open. Several travellers have mentioned such improved spots, which they met with in their progress, and have expressly specified the cucumber as one of the plants cultivated in such exposed places ; which throws an additional light on the words of the prophet : the daughter of Zion is deserted as a mean and temporary booth, in a garden of cucumbers, which had neither wall nor hedge, but lay exposed on all sides to the depredations of evil doers. Besides a variety of esculent vegetables, the vine was frequently to be seen in these cultivated patches loaded with its richest produce ; which must be doubly welcome to those who travel in a thinly peopled, or desolate country. To these inviting clusters, the prophet Hosea seems to refer, in the following declaration : “ I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness.” The meaning is not, I found Israel when they were in the wilderness pleasant to me as grapes ; but, as grapes found in the wilderness, are exceedingly pleasing to the hungry or parched traveller, so has Israel been to me. In Arabia, and probably in other parts of the east, instead of a solitary watchman in the middle of the plantation, they place guards at certain distances round the whole field, increasing or diminishing their numbers according to the supposed danger. This custom furnishes a clear and easy explanation of a passage in the prophecies of Jeremiah, where he solemnly warns his people of their approaching calamities : “ As keepers of a field, are they against her round about ; because she hath been rebellious against me, saith the Lord.”^a

^a Jer. iv, 17. See Chardin, and Harmer's Observ. vol. i, p. 217, 218, 219.

The oriental garden displays little method, beauty, or design ; the whole being commonly no more than a confused medley of fruit trees, with beds of esculent plants, and even plots of wheat and barley sometimes interspersed. The garden belonging to the governor of Eleus, a Turkish town, on the western border of the Hellespont, which Dr. Chandler visited, consisted only of a very small spot of ground, walled in, and containing only two vines, a fig and a pomegranate tree, and a well of excellent water.^r And it would seem, the garden of an ancient Israelite could not boast of greater variety ; for the grape, the fig, and the pomegranate, are almost the only fruits which it produced. This fact may perhaps give us some insight into the reason of the sudden and irresistible conviction which flashed on the mind of Nathaniel, when the Saviour said to him, “ When thou wast under the fig-tree I saw thee.” The good man seems to have been engaged in devotional exercises, in a small retired garden, walled in, and concealed from the scrutinizing eyes of men. The place was so small, that he was perfectly certain no man but himself was there ; and so completely defended, that none could break through, or look over the fence ; and by consequence, that no eye was upon him, but the all-seeing eye of God ; and, therefore, since Christ saw him there, Nathaniel knew he could be no other than the Son of God, and the promised Messiah.

The gardens mentioned in the song of Solomon, were stored with a much greater variety of plants ; but then it is to be remembered, these belonged to a prince remarkable for his curiosity, for his knowledge of natural history, and for his magnificence. These royal gardens appear to

^r Trav. p. 16.

have been at a distance from the palace ; while the miniature gardens of the ancient Jews, in common life, were adjoining to their houses.

Water, in the absence of which every plant is burnt up, during the raging heats of an oriental summer, is indispensable in their gardens. All those near Aleppo are on the banks of the river, which refreshes that city and the surrounding fields, or on the sides of the rill which supplies their aqueduct ; the rest of the country is converted, by the scorching beams of the summer sun, into an arid waste ; the gardens only retaining their verdure, on account of the moisture supplied from the river.^s A garden without a refreshing stream, is quickly deprived of its shade, stripped of its vegetation, and converted into a joyless desert. This will enable us to form a clear and vivid idea of the energy with which the following declaration of Isaiah would fall on the ear of a Jew : “ For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water.”^t So necessary is a sufficient supply of water for the cultivation, and even for the preservation and existence of a garden in those regions, that not one is to be found unprovided with a certain supply, either from some neighbouring river, or from a reservoir, collected from springs, or filled with rain water in the proper season, in sufficient quantity to afford an ample store for the rest of the year. The necessity of an abundant supply, is evident from the emphatical manner in which the sacred historian states, concerning the seat of primeval innocence, that “ a river went out of Eden, to water the garden.” The habitation of upright man was formed by the unsparing hand of Jehovah himself, and stored with every

^s Russel's Hist. vol. i, p. 51.

^t Isa. i, 30.

plant and tree that was pleasant to the sight, and good for food ; but the circumstance of its being well supplied with water, seemed necessary to complete the picture of a garden, in the eye of an oriental. This idea is confirmed and illustrated by the management of the gardens which enclose the city of Damascus, described in the first part of this work.^u The finest object which met the eye of Maundrell, at the palace of the emir of Beroot, (ancient Berytus,) and the most deserving of remembrance, was the orange garden. It contains a large quadrangular plat of ground, divided into sixteen smaller squares, four in a row, with walks between them. The walks are shaded with orange trees, of a large spreading size. Every one of these sixteen smaller squares was bordered with stone; and in the stone work were troughs, contrived with great art, for conveying the water all over the garden; little outlets being cut at every tree, for the stream as it passed by, to flow out and water it.^v The royal gardens at Is-pahan, according to Kempfer's description, are watered precisely in the same manner.^w The same method of irrigation has been followed in the east from time immemorial; for Homer leads the streams of a gelid fountain through the extensive gardens of Alcinous.^x

These statements give us a clear idea of the (פלגיי-מים) Palgay maim, mentioned in the first Psalm, and other places of Scripture, the divisions of waters; or, the waters distributed in artificial canals. The prophet Jeremiah has imitated and elegantly amplified the figure used by

^u Vol. i, p. 230.

^v See Maundrell's Journey, p. 39.

^w Morier's Trav. vol. i, p. 163, and vol. ii, p. 162. In Hindostan, according to Forbes, they water their gardens in the same way. Orient. Mem. vol. i, p. 252.

^x Odyssey, lib. vii, l. 130.

the Psalmist : “ He shall be like a tree planted by the water side, and which sendeth forth her roots to the aqueduct ; she shall not fear when the heat cometh ; but her leaf shall be green ; and in the year of drought she shall not be anxious, neither shall she cease from bearing fruit.”^y It gives us also the true meaning of that beautiful proverb ; “ The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord, as the small streams, or canals of water : He turneth it whithersoever he will.”^z The direction, even of the king’s heart, is in the hand of Jehovah, as the distribution of water through the garden by different canals, is at the will of the gardener.^a

Such distant imitations of the garden of Eden, were numbered among the pleasures in which Solomon indulged, and which he mentions as works on which he set a particular value : “ I made me great works ; I builded me houses ; I planted me vineyards ; I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kinds of fruits ; I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees.”^b The supposed remains of these magnificent undertakings, have been described by more travellers than one, who visited and examined them in the course of their wanderings. The reservoirs, which still bear the name of the powerful and splendid monarch by whom they were probably constructed, are three in number, lying in a row above each other, being so disposed, that the waters of the uppermost may descend into the second, and those of the second into the third. Their figure is quadrangular ; the breadth is the same in all, amounting to about ninety paces : in their length there is

^y Jer. xvii, 8.

^a Lowth on Isaiah, vol. ii, p. 22, 23, 24.

^z Prov. xxi, 1.

^b Eccl. ii, 4, 5, 6.

some difference between them ; the first being an hundred and sixty paces long ; the second, two hundred ; the third, two hundred and twenty. They are lined with stone, and plastered, and contain a great depth of water.^b

From these facts, it may be seen with what peculiar force and beauty our Lord compares his people, on account of their inherent purity, the work of his own Spirit, and the blessings which they are the means of diffusing wherever they come, “ to a fountain of gardens,”^c so indispensable to the verdure and fruitfulness of a garden in those parts of the world. Nor is it with less propriety Jehovah promises to his ancient people : “ Thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters fail not ; ”^d lovely, rich, and flourishing in holy dispositions, and in works of righteousness ; the delight of God, the glory of Christ, the admiration of angels, the joy of the whole earth. But “ the beauty and value of a garden refreshed by shade and water is perhaps no where more highly estimated than by the prophet Jeremiah in his prediction concerning the return of the captives from Babylon : “ Therefore shall they come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd : and their soul shall be as a watered garden ; and they shall not sorrow any more at all.”^e

Though the oriental garden has few pretensions to design or elegance, still some attention is discovered in the arrangement of the plots, and in their cultivation. At Aleppo, the whole extent of their gardens, which are separated from each other by low stone walls, is subdivided

^b Maundrell's Journey, p. 89, 90. ^c Song iv, 5. ^d Isa. lviii, 11.

^e Jer. xxxi, 12. Forbes's Orient. Mem. vol. ii, p. 241. See also Russel's Hist. of Aleppo, vol. i, p. 50, 51.

into square or oblong fields, irregularly bordered with dwarf trees, flowering shrubs, and trees of taller growth; among which the plane, the weeping willow, the ash, and the white poplar, make a conspicuous figure. Within some of these enclosures are cultivated apples, melons, and cucumbers, together with a variety of esculent roots, greens and legumes, for the kitchen; in others, cotton, tobacco, sesamum, palma Christi, and lucern; and some are sown with barley, to be cut green for the use of the horses in the spring.

Interspersed among the kitchen enclosures, are large plantations of pomegranate, of plum, or of cherry trees; and sometimes groves composed of the various fruit trees which the country produces. All these trees are standards; and though sometimes planted in rows, they are for the most part crowded close together with little regard to symmetry, forming wild and impervious thickets. In other parts of the grounds, a more complete shade is formed by tufts of lofty trees, which uniting their branches at top, give shelter to roses of different sorts, and to a profusion of wild aromatic herbs, which, thus protected from the sun, long retain their fragrance. To such a mode of arrangement, the inspired writers more than once allude. Thus, the prophet Ezekiel in his parable of the two eagles and the vine: "There was also another great eagle, with great wings, and many feathers; and behold, this vine did bend her roots towards him, and shot forth her branches toward him, that he might water it by the furrows of her plantations. It was planted in a good soil, by great waters, that it might bring forth branches, and that it might bear fruit, that it might be a goodly vine."^h

The extensive gardens in various parts of Syria, de-

^h Ezek. xvii, 7.

scribed by Russel and other travellers, will enable us to form a tolerably correct idea of the gardens and orchards of Solomon, in whose fragrant and umbrageous retreats, he seems to have so greatly delighted. That magnificent prince appears to have had a range of such enclosures, appropriated to the cultivation of particular fruits; in which he was imitated by the succeeding kings of Israel and Judah. In allusion to this arrangement, our Lord says to the church, "Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant fruits. - - I went down into the garden of nuts, to see the fruits of the valley."ⁱ The prophet Isaiah compares the daughter of Zion to a garden of cucumbers; and Ahab desired to have the vineyard of Naboth for a garden of herbs.^j

But the people of Israel, and other oriental nations of those days, appear to have bestowed particular attention on the cultivation of the vine. The site of the vineyard was carefully chosen in fields of a loose crumbling soil, on a rich plain, or on a sloping hill rising with a gentle ascent; or, where the acclivity was very steep, on terraces supported by masonry, and turned as much as possible from the setting sun. The plot was enclosed with a wall; the stones and other encumbrances were removed, and the choicest plants were selected to form the plantation.^k Within the vineyard, low walls were sometimes raised for the purpose of supporting the vines; a practice which seems to have been adopted before the days of Jacob, for in the blessing of Joseph, he speaks of it in a manner which shews that it was quite familiar to the vine-dresser: "Joseph is a fruit-

ⁱ Song iv, 13; and vi, 11.

^j 1 Kings xxi, 1.

^k Varro de Re Rustica, lib. i, cap. 26. Columella de Re Rust. lib. iv, cap. 3, &c.

ful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall."¹ The Persian vine-dressers do all in their power to make the vine run up the wall and curl over on the other side, which they do by tying stones to the extremity of the tendrils. In some other countries, the vine is frequently made to entwine on trelleses, round a well where in the heat of the day, whole families collect and sit in the shade. By this beautiful image then it appears that while the dying patriarch justly appreciated and highly praised the admirable qualities of his beloved son, he intimated to his family in the most delicate but significant manner their obligation to Joseph for the protection and comfort they enjoyed under his government.^m

The wine-press constructed for expressing the juice of the grapes, does not seem to be a moveable implement in the east; and our Lord in the parable of the vineyard, says expressly, that it was formed by digging. Chardin found the wine-press in Persia was made after the same manner; it was a hollow place dug in the ground, and lined with mason work. Besides this, they had what the Romans called *lacus*, the lake, a large open place or vessel, which, by a conduit or spout, received the must from the wine-press. In very hot countries it was perhaps necessary, or at least convenient, to have the lake underground, or in a cave hewed out of the rock for coolness, that the heat might not cause too great a fermentation, and sour the must.ⁿ

To these circumstances, the prophet Isaiah distinctly refers in the beginning of the fifth chapter: "My well beloved has a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: and he

¹ Gen. xlix, 22.

^m Morier's Trav. vol. i, p. 241.

ⁿ Lowth on Isaiah, vol. ii, p. 61.

fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof; and planted it with the choicest vine; and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a wine-press therein; and he looked that it should bring forth grapes; and it brought forth wild grapes." The tower which the prophet mentions, and which our Lord also introduces into one of his parables, is generally explained by commentators, as designed for the keepers of the vineyard to watch and defend the fruits. But for this purpose, it was usual to make a little temporary hut, called in the first chapter, not a tower, but a cottage, which might serve for the short season while the grapes were ripening, and was afterwards removed. The tower, therefore, according to Lowth, means a building of a more permanent nature and use; the farm of the vineyard, as we may call it, containing all the offices and implements, and the whole apparatus necessary for cultivating the vineyard and making the wine. To this image in the allegory, the situation, the manner of building, the use, and the whole service of the temple exactly answered.ⁿ They have still such towers for pleasure or use, in their gardens in the oriental regions; for Marcus Sannutus, as quoted by Harmer, informs us, that, in the thirteenth century, the inhabitants of Ptolemais beat down the towers of their gardens to the ground, and removed the stones of them, together with those of their burying-places, on the approach of the Tartars. The gardens of Damascus are furnished with the same kind of edifices.^o In most of the gardens near Aleppo, summer houses are built for the reception of the public. In others, at a greater distance, are tolerably commodious villas, to which the Franks resort in the spring, as the natives do in the

ⁿ Lowth on Isaiah, vol. ii, p. 60.

^o Maundrell's Journey, p. 122.

summer.^p “To a tower, or building of this kind, it is to be supposed,” says Russel, “our Lord refers in the parable; for it is scarcely to be imagined that he is speaking of the slight and unexpensive buildings in a vineyard; which, indeed, are sometimes so slight, as to consist only of four poles, with a floor on the top of them, to which they ascend by a ladder: but rather of those elegant turrets erected in gardens, where the eastern people of fortune spend some considerable part of their time.” But this excellent writer expressly admits that in all the orchards near Aleppo, a small square watch-house is built for the accommodation of the watchmen in the fruit season, or in their stead, temporary bowers are constructed of wood, and thatched with green reeds and branches. Small and detached square towers for the accommodation of the watchmen appointed to guard the vineyards, are still to be met with in Judea.^q It is more probably to the substantial watch-tower that the Saviour alludes, than either to the offices of the vineyard, or the commodious summer-house.

The vineyard has been in all ages, and in every part of the world adapted to the culture of the vine, a scene of joy and singing. While employed in checking the loose straggling boughs, clearing away the superfluous leaves, and laying open the swelling grapes to the sun, the vine-dresser beguiles his labours with a song:

“Hinc alta sub rupe canet frondator ad auras.” *Vir. Ecl. 1.*

And when the labours of the year are finished, when the vines are tied, and the vineyard lays aside the pruning-hook, now, says the same bard, the exhausted vintager salutes in song his utmost rows:

^p Russel's *Hist. of Aleppo*, vol. i, p. 50.

^q Buckingham's *Trav.* vol. i, p. 335.

“ Jam vinctæ vites ; jam falcem arbusta reponunt ;
Jam canit extremos effetus vinitor antes.” *Geor. ii, l. 417.*^r

Not less delighted with the pleasing labours of the vineyard, the Syrian vine-dresser gave vent also to his joyous feelings in the same way ; for in describing the desolations of Moab, the prophet Isaiah foretold, that “ the song shall cease from the vineyard ; gladness is taken away, and joy out of the plentiful field ; and in the vineyard there shall be no singing, neither shall there be shouting. The treaders shall tread out no wine in their presses : I have made their vintage shouting to cease.”^s

Ripe grapes begin to appear in the market of Aleppo in September, but the height of the vintage is not till November,^r and it seems to happen about the same time in Palestine. But if the fruit of the vine come to maturity at Aleppo and Jerusalem nearly about the same time, it must have been the latter end of July, or rather the beginning of August, that the spies were sent by Moses to search out the promised land. He says they received their instructions at the time of the first ripe grapes, and after forty days, they returned and brought with them a large bunch of grapes, pomegranates, and figs ; which proves that these fruits ripen at the same time. This agrees with Dr. Shaw’s account, that grapes begin to ripen in Barbary the latter end of July, and are ready for the vintage in September ; the kermesz, or fig, properly so called, which they preserve and make up into cakes, is rarely ripe before August, the month which produces the ripe pomegranates.^u The spies then, re-

^r The vintage was also a time of high festivity in Greece. *Hesiod. Scutum Herculis, l. 292-301.*

^s *Isa. xvi, 10.*

^t *Russel’s Hist. of Aleppo, vol. i, p. 80.*

^u *Shaw’s Trav. vol. i, p. 267.*

ceived their instructions about the beginning of August, and returned in the middle of September; and their observations concerning the fatness of the land, must have related to the figs, grapes, and other fruits of the country, rather than to the corn which had been long before gathered in, and lay concealed in their secret repositories.^v

The juice of the grape, it is well known, is expressed in the east by treading, an operation which Dr. Chandler had an opportunity of seeing near Smyrna.^w Black grapes were spread on the ground in beds, and exposed to the sun to dry for raisins; while in another part, the juice was expressed for wine, a man with feet and legs bare, treading the fruit in a kind of cistern, with a hole or vent near the bottom, and a vessel beneath it to receive the liquor. When a few clusters of grapes are to be squeezed, it may be done commodiously enough by the hand; in this way, Pharaoh's butler supposed he took the grapes and pressed them into his master's cup. This, it is true, was only a visionary scene, but we must suppose it was agreeable to the custom of the country. But when a large quantity of juice was required, the grapes were subjected in the wine-press to the feet of a treader.^x Oil of olives was expressed in the same way, before the invention of mills. The existence of this practice in Palestine, is ascertained by that threatening in the prophecies of Micah: "Thou shalt sow, but thou shalt not reap; thou shalt tread the olives, but shalt not anoint thee with oil; and sweet wine, but shalt not drink wine."^y But unequivocal traces of it may be discovered in ages long anterior to the days of that prophet; for in the blessing of

^v Harmer's Observ. vol. i, p. 146, 439.

^w Trav. in Greece, p. 2.

^x Varro de Re Rust. lib. i, cap. 54.

^y Micah vi, 15.

Asher, we find Moses praying: "Let Asher dip his foot in oil."^z Whether any preparation was used in those ancient times to facilitate the expression of the juice, we are not informed; but it is certain that mills are now used for pressing and grinding the olives which grow in the neighbourhood of Athens, and probably in other eastern countries. These mills are in the town, and not in the spot where the olives grow; and seem to be used in consequence of its being found, that the mere weight of the human body is insufficient for the purpose of effectually extracting the oil.^a

The treading of grapes and olives is a custom to which frequent reference is made by the inspired writers. The glorious Redeemer of the church appeared in vision to the prophet, in the garb and mein of a mighty conqueror returning in triumph from the field of battle, and drew from him this admiring interrogation: "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength?" To which the Saviour answers: "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." The prophet resumes: "Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine fat?" And Jehovah Jesus replies: "I have trodden the wine-press alone; and of the people there was none with me; for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment."^b As the raiment of the treader was sprinkled with the blood of the grapes, so were the garments of the Redeemer, with the blood of his enemies, that were as effectually and easily

^z Deut. xxxiii, 24.

^a Harmer's Observ. vol. i, p. 439.

^b Isa. lxiii, 1, &c.

crushed by his almighty power, as are the clusters of the vine when fully ripe, beneath the feet of the treader. The same figure is employed in the book of Revelation, to express the decisive and fearful destruction which awaits the man of sin and his coadjutors, that refuse to turn from the error of their way: “And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God. And the wine-press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine-press, even unto the horses bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.”^c The new wines, in some places, are always poured into casks that had been kept for ages, and after remaining on the old lees of former years, are drawn off for use, which adds greatly to the quality of the wine.^d To this practice the words of the prophet evidently refer; “And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.”

The vintager cuts down the grapes from the vine with a sharp hook or sickle; for the command to the destroying angel in the Revelation is: “Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.”^e But the olive was sometimes beaten off the tree, and sometimes shaken. The former method is mentioned by Moses in one of his precepts: “When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the stranger, for

^c Rev. xiv, 18.

^d De Tott's Mem. vol. ii, p. 359. Isa. xxv, 6.

^e Columella de Re Rust. lib. iv, cap. 24, 25.

the fatherless, and for the widow.”^f The latter is marked by the prophet Isaiah: “Yet gleaning grapes shall be left in it, as the shaking of an olive tree; two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof, saith the Lord God of Israel.”^g It occurs again in a denunciation of divine judgments by the same prophet: “When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, there shall be as the shaking of an olive tree, and as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done.”^h The conjecture of Harmer on these quotations, in which the shaking of the olive tree is connected with the gleaning of grapes, is not improbable, “that the shaking of the olive tree does not indicate an improvement made in after times on the original mode of gathering them; or different methods of procedure by different people in the same age and country, who possessed olive yards; but rather expressed the difference between the gathering of the main crop by the owners, and the way in which the poor collected the few olive berries that were left, and which, by the law of Moses, they were permitted to take.”ⁱ

The custom of beating the olive with long poles to make the fruit fall, is still followed in some parts of Italy. This foolish method, besides hurting the plant, and spoiling many branches that would bear the year following, makes the ripe and unripe fruit fall indiscriminately, and bruises a great deal of both kinds, by which they become rancid in the heaps, and give an ill-flavoured oil.^j Such is the statement of the abbot Fortis, in his account of Dalmatia;^k we are not then to wonder, that in the time of Moses,

^f Deut. xxiv, 20.

^g Isa. xvii, 6.

^h Ch. xxiv, 13.

ⁱ Harmer's Observ. vol. iii, p. 271, 272.

^j Varro de Re Rust. lib. i, cap. 55.

^k P. 412.

when the art of cultivation was in so simple and unimproved a state, beating should have been the common way of gathering olives by the owners, who were disposed to leave, we may suppose, as few as possible, and were forbidden by their law to go over the branches a second time. But shaking them appears to have been sufficient, when they had hung till they were fully ripe ; and was therefore practised by the poor, or by strangers, who were either not provided with such long poles as the owners possessed, or did not find them necessary. Indeed it is not improbable, that the owners were well aware of the injury done to the olive trees by beating, although they practised it, because it was the most effectual way of gathering the fruit with which they were acquainted ; and might therefore prohibit the poor and the stranger to collect the gleanings in that manner : they were on that account, reduced to the necessity of shaking the olive berries from the tree, how ineffectual soever might be the method, or remain without them. The main crop then, seems to have been taken from the olive by beating, and the gleanings uniformly by shaking. Under this conviction, Dr. Lowth has, with great judgment, translated the sixth verse of the seventeenth chapter of Isaiah : A glean-
ing shall be left in it, as in the shaking of the olive tree.^k

In peaceful times, the press in which the grapes and olives were trodden, was constructed in the vineyard : but in time of war and danger, it was removed into the nearest city.^l This precaution the restored captives were reduced to take for their safety, at the time they were visited by Nehemiah. In a state of great weakness themselves, without an efficient government or means of defence, they

^k See Harmer's Observ. vol. iii, p. 273.

^l Chandler's Trav. p. 126.

were exposed to the hostile machinations of numerous and powerful enemies. For this reason, many of the Jews brought their grapes from the vineyards, and trod them in Jerusalem, the only place of safety which the desolated country afforded. "In those days," said Nehemiah, "saw I in Judah, some treading wine-presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves and lading asses; and also wine grapes and figs, and all manner of burthens which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day."^m Had these wine-presses been at a distance from Jerusalem, Nehemiah, who so strictly observed the precept of resting on that day, would not have seen the violation of which he complains.

Our translators, in Mr. Harmer's opinion, seem to have been guilty of an oversight in the interpretation of this verse, which plainly supposes, that sheaves of corn were brought into Jerusalem at the very time men were treading the wine-presses. This, he observes, is a strange anachronism, since the harvest there was finished in or before the third month, and the vintage was not till the seventh.

But it may be replied in favour of our translators, that by Mr. Harmer's own admission, they have at present a species of corn in the east which is not ripe till the end of summer; which made Rauwolf say, it was the time of harvest when he arrived at Joppa, on the thirteenth of September. But if they have such a species of corn now, it is more than probable they had it then; for the customs and management of the orientals, suffer almost no alteration from the lapse of time, and change of circumstances. If this be admitted, the difficulty vanishes; and there is

^m Neh. xiii, 15.

nothing incongruous or absurd in supposing, that Nehemiah might see his countrymen bringing this late grain in sheaves from the field, to tread it out in the city, for fear of their numerous and malicious foes, who might have set upon them, had they not taken this precaution, as the Arabs frequently do on the present inhabitants, and seized the heaps on the barn floor. Mr. Harmer translates the Hebrew term, parcels of grapes ; but as the word signifies a heap of any thing, it may with equal propriety be rendered parcels or sheaves of corn, especially as grapes are mentioned afterwards. It is true, our author makes them dried grapes, but for the word *dried*, he has no authority from the original text ; there is no good reason, therefore, to find fault with our translators in this instance.

In the gardens around Aleppo, commodious villas are built for the use of the inhabitants, to which they retire during the oppressive heats of summer.ⁿ Here, amid the wild and almost impervious thickets of pomegranate, and other fruit-bearing trees, the languid native, and exhausted traveller, find a delightful retreat from the scorching beams of the sun. A similar custom of retiring into the country, and taking shelter in the gardens at that season, appears to have been followed in Palestine in ages very remote ; for in the Song of Solomon this invitation from the church to her Redeemer occurs : “ Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field ; let us lodge in the villages ; let us go up early to the vineyards ; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth ; there will I give thee my loves.”^o In another passage she says to her companions :

ⁿ Russel's Hist. of Aleppo, vol. i, p. 50.

^o Song vii, 11, 12.

“ My beloved has gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies ;”^p and in another, she addresses her beloved in these appropriate terms : “ Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice.”

The exquisite pleasure which an oriental feels, while he reclines under the deep shade of the pomegranate, the apple, and other fruitful trees in the Syrian gardens, which, uniting their branches over his head, defend him from the glowing firmament, is well described by Russel. “ Revived by the freshning breeze, the purling of the brooks, and the verdure of the groves, his ear will catch the melody of the nightingale, delightful, beyond what is heard in England ; with conscious gratitude to heaven, he will recline on the simple mat, and bless the hospitable shelter. Beyond the limits of the gardens hardly a vestige of verdure remains ; the fields are turned into a parched and naked waste.” One almost feels the scorching beam, and sickens under its irresistible force, in perusing the description of nature’s bard :

“ ’Tis raging noon, and vertical the sun
Darts on the head direct his forceful rays.
O’er heaven and earth, far as the ranging eye
Can sweep, a dazzling deluge reigns, and all
From pole to pole is undistinguished blaze.
In vain the sight dejected, to the ground
Stoops for relief ; thence hot ascending steams
And keen reflection pain.”^q

^p Song vi, 2.

^q In Persia, Mr. Martyn found the heat of the external air quite intolerable. In spite of every precaution, the moisture of the body being soon quite exhausted, he grew restless, and thought he should have lost his senses, and concluded, that though he might hold out a day or two, death was inevitable. *Memoir of the Life of the Rev. Henry Martyn*, p. 357.

But attend the oriental to the refreshing shade of his garden, and then

“Cool through the nerves his pleasing comfort glides ;
The heart beats glad ; the fresh expanded eye
And ear resume their watch ; the sinews knit ;
And life shoots swift through all the lighten'd limbs.”

Not only the actual enjoyment of shade and water diffuses the sweetest pleasure through the panting bosom of an oriental, but what is almost inconceivable to the native of a northern clime, even the very idea, the simple recurrence of these gratifications to the mind, conveys a lively satisfaction, and a renovating energy to his heart, when ready to fail him in the midst of the burning desert. “He who smiles at the pleasure we received,” says Lichtenstein, “from only being reminded of shade, or thinks this observation trivial, must feel the force of an African sun, to have an idea of the value of shade and water.”^r

These descriptions will enable us to form a more correct notion of the inexpressible delight which the longing Christian feels, when he is admitted to fellowship “with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” The very conception of such fellowship, revives his fainting soul ; the sure expectation, kindles a holy ardour in his bosom ; and the actual possession, fills his heart with “joy unspeakable, and full of glory.” “I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste ; stay me with flaggons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love.”^s It is therefore no small favour to provide a shelter from the destructive heats of an eastern sky : “And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day time, from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and

^r Trav. in Africa, p. 104.

^s Song ii, 35.

for a covert from storm and from rain.”^t “They shall not hunger nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor the sun smite them.”^u But who can conceive the joy and the peace which the true believer experiences under the protection of divine power and goodness? “They shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads : they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”^v

Parties of pleasure frequently repair to the Syrian gardens, in the spring and summer, to regale themselves with the fruits, or to gather flowers ; a custom to which the royal preacher alludes in several parts of the Song. Thus the spouse, after inviting the refreshing breezes to awake, and blow upon her garden, that the spices, which adorned and enriched it, might exhale their fragrance, addresses her Lord : “ Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits ;” let him regard with complacency, the delightful effects of his grace, produced in the hearts, or displayed in the lives of his people : And to her invitation, he replies : “ I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse : I have gathered my myrrh with my spice ; I have eaten my honey-comb with my honey ; I have drunk my wine with my milk ; eat, O friends ; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.”^w In allusion to the same custom, she presents, in the seventh chapter, another supplication ; “ Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field ; let us lodge in the villages ; let us get up early to the vineyards ; let us see if the vine flourish ; whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth ; there will I give thee my loves.” Like those that, weary of the

^t Isa. iv, 6.

^v Isa. xxxv, 10.

^u Isa. xlix, 10.

^w Song iv, 16 ; and v, 1.

bustle and noise of the crowded city, and exhausted with the increasing heats of the rising year, long for the tranquil pleasures of the garden, or the fruitful field, the reviving coolness of the shade, and the murmur of the streaming rill,—the heaven-born soul desires to leave for a while, the cares and hurry of this world, to enjoy, in secret retirement or with fellow believers, the presence and smiles of his Lord ; to mark the growth of divine grace in his heart ; and whether the fruits of righteousness are advancing to maturity ; whether new dispositions of holiness are beginning to appear, and new resolutions to expand, which require the skill and care of the Great Husbandman, to defend and cherish. And while he requests the presence of his Redeemer, in the ordinances of his grace, he promises him the best affections of his heart ; the renewed professions of his love ; the ardent breathings of holy desire, kindled and sustained by the smiles of his favour ; he engages to entertain him with a display of all the fruits of the Spirit, which are valuable and lovely as the mandrake, and numerous as the products of the varied year, devoted to his service, reserved for his honour, and exhibited for his glory.

CHAP. III.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF SCRIPTURE, FROM THE HOUSES,
CITIES, WALLS, AND TOWERS OF THE EAST.

The excavations of nature or art, the first habitations of mankind.—The tent succeeded, and was supplanted by houses of mud or stone.—Houses of the Kabyles, how constructed.—The largest of them has rarely more than one chamber.—Houses of the lower orders in Egypt.—Houses in Judea.—Their walls composed partly of combustible materials.—Ruinous effects of stormy winds and heavy rains upon mud-walled houses.—Unrivalled magnificence of many oriental edifices.—Their mortar, how made.—General style of building.—Streets narrow.—Entrance of their houses.—Their doors opening into the court, very small.—House of a man in power known by the height of his gate.—Quadrangular court.—Cloister and gallery.—Doors of their houses.—Windows.—Walls of their houses richly adorned.—Ceiling.—Floors.—Carpets.—Beds.—Of what they consist.—Staircase.—Door at the top.—The roof.—Battlements.—Arbour on the roof.—Common road along the roofs of the houses.—Back-houses.—Temple or house of Dagon.—Their apartments, how cooled.—Members of a family sleep in different beds.—The houses lighted with lamps.—Their furniture.—Nails.—Fires in winter.—The houses decorated with trees, shrubs, and flowers.—Surrounded with lofty walls.—Method of securing their gates.—Locks and keys.—Watchmen.—Watch-tower.—Fortified cities.—Citadel.—Winter and summer houses.—Shaded with trees.

THE aboriginal inhabitants of those regions, appear to have taken up their abode in caves, in dens, and in holes of the rocks, the excavations of nature or art, of which many remain to the present times, and afford occasional shelter to the wandering shepherd and his flocks, and in times of danger, to the trembling fugitive and his family.^a

^a Odyssey, lib. ix, l. 113, 114, 400. Josephus Antiq. book xiv, ch. 15, sec. 4. Buckingham's Trav. in Palestine, vol. i, p. 176, 191.—The whole

But as their flocks and herds multiplied, the Syrian shepherds were compelled to go in quest of distant pastures, from whence they found it impossible to return at night to their immoveable retreats. Necessity, the mother of the arts, taught them to construct the tent, which they might carry along with them in their wanderings, and set up and take down at their pleasure. But as the number of the people daily increased, and the necessity of applying themselves to the cultivation of the soil became obvious, they found the tent an incommodious habitation, and their fields often lay at a considerable distance from the cavern ; while the division of property, which was introduced at a very early period, and the natural desire in every family to live by themselves, suggested the idea of houses, constructed of more durable materials than the tent, which admitted of being placed sufficiently near for mutual assistance, and at the same time furnished the comfort which they so much desired, of living by themselves, and securing their own interests.

In the opinion of Pliny, the oriental barbarian took the hint of building a house for himself and his family, from the swallow ; and in imitation of his feathered instructor, made his first essay in mud.^b The Kabyles, on the coast of Barbary, raise their dwellings with hurdles, daubed over with mud, with square cakes of clay baked in the sun, or stones from some adjacent ruin. The roofs are covered with straw or turf, supported by reeds or branches of trees. The largest of them has rarely more than one of the caves on the coast of Palestine, which are very numerous, and many of them well designed and executed, our author thinks were the habitations of the ancient Canaanites, some of their strongholds near the sea, from which the children of Israel could not dislodge them. P. 192, 224, 288. Many of the grottoes around Jerusalem he views in the same light. P. 289.

^b Nat. Hist. lib. x, cap. 34.

chamber, which serves for a kitchen, dining-room, and bed-chamber; besides one corner of it, which is reserved for their foals, calves, and kids. As these hovels are always fixed and immoveable, they are undoubtedly what the ancients called *magalia*; and therefore, Carthage itself, before the time of Dido, was nothing more than a cluster of mud-built hovels:^c

“*Miratur molem Æneas, magalia quondam.*” *Æn.* lib. i, l. 425.

The houses of the lower orders in Egypt are in like manner constructed of unburnt bricks, or square pices of clay, baked in the sun, and only one story high; but those of the higher classes, of stone, and generally two, and sometimes three stories high. These facts are at once a short and lively comment on the words of the prophet: “All the people shall know, even Ephraim, and the inhabitants of Samaria, that say, in the pride and stoutness of heart, The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stone; the sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars.”^d Bricks dried in the sun, are poor

^c Dr. Shaw’s Trav. vol. i, p. 400.—The houses of the lower classes in Persia are built of the same materials. Malcom’s Hist. vol. ii, p. 525.—The houses of Bassorah are built partly of sun-dried and partly of burnt bricks. Kinneir’s Geographical Memoir of the Persian Empire, p. 289.—The villages of modern Egypt still consist of mud and straw-built huts, with white pigeon-houses on the top. Richardson’s Trav. vol. ii, p. 141.

^d Isa. ix, 9, 10.—Richardson informs us that “the brick pyramid in Egypt is much fallen down on the north side, and looks as if the roof of one chamber had given way, and the walls fallen in: the bricks are sun-dried and remarkably fresh; they have been made of mud and cut straw, in the same manner that bricks are made in Egypt in the present day”—(Trav. vol. ii, p. 146); and it may be added, in the days of that Pharaoh who made the lives of enslaved and proscribed Israel “bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field.” Exod. i, 11–14. The ruins of On, or Heliopolis, consist chiefly of houses of unburnt brick, of the same description with the ruins in Upper Egypt. Such, it is most probable, were the treasure cities which the people of Israel built for Pharaoh. P. 164.

materials for building, compared with hewn stone, which in Egypt, is almost equal to marble ; and forms a strong contrast between the splendid palace, and mud-walled cabin. And if, as is probable, the houses of the higher orders in Israel were built with the same species of costly and beautiful stone, the contrast stated by the prophet, places the vaunting of his wealthier countrymen in a very strong light. The boastful extravagance of that people, is still further displayed by the next figure : “ The sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars ; ” the forests of sycamore, the wood of which we have been accustomed to employ in building, are cut down by the enemy, but instead of them we will import cedars, of whose fragrant and beautiful wood we will construct and adorn our habitations. The sycamore grew in abundance, in the low country of Judea, and was not much esteemed ; but the cedar was highly valued ; it was brought at a great expense, and with much labour, from the distant and rugged summits of Lebanon, to beautify the dwellings of the great, the palaces of kings, and the temple of Jehovah. It was therefore, an extravagant boast, which betrayed the pride and vanity of their depraved hearts, that all the warnings, threatenings, and judgments of the living God, were insufficient to subdue or restrain.

In Judea, and some of the neighbouring countries, where rain often falls in winter in very copious and violent showers, instead of earth and straw, they make use of wood in constructing the walls of their dwellings. In this manner was the wall originally built, which enclosed the court of the temple at Jerusalem ; and it was re-constructed of the same materials, wood and stone, when the Jews returned from their long and painful captivity, by

the direction of the Persian monarch. It is evident that the walls of their fortified cities were partly constructed of combustible materials; for the prophet, denouncing the judgments of God upon Syria and other countries, declares; “I will send a fire on the wall of Gaza, which shall devour the palaces thereof.”^e The walls of Tyre and Rabbah seem to have been of the same perishable materials; for the prophet adds: “I will send a fire on the wall of Tyrus, which shall devour the palaces thereof;” and again; “I will kindle a fire in the walls of Rabbah, and it shall devour the palaces thereof with shouting in the day of battle.”^f The more durable materials of wood and stone, were preferred by the inhabitants of Canaan from the earliest times; for Moses, in the law concerning the leprous house, proceeds on the supposition that their houses were built of these: “Then the priest shall command that they take away the stones in which the plague is.”^g The greater durableness and beauty of such edifices have not, however, prevailed on the lower orders in the east to abandon their mud-walled habitations, even in those places where stone may be procured in abundance. At Damascus, for example, they continue to build with mud and slime, though they have plenty of stones near the city.^h In the time of Job, and probably for a long succession of ages, the houses of all ranks in the land of Uz were built of mud; for he charges the adulterer with digging through the walls of his neighbour’s house, with the view of gratifying his vile propensities: “In the dark,” said the sorrowful and indignant patriarch, “they dig through houses which they had marked for themselves in the day time:

^e Amos i, 7.^f Verses 10, 14.^g Lev. xiv, 40.^h Maundrell’s Journey, p. 124.

they know not the light.”ⁱ These walls of dried clay, when moistened with copious showers, must have been liable to accidents of this kind ; and as the walls of eastern houses are made very thick, in order to shelter the inhabitants more effectually from the oppressive heats, the term digging, as applied to them, is peculiarly expressive.^j

The short duration of mud-walled buildings is not the only objection to the use of unburnt brick ; for in windy weather, the streets are incommoded with dust, and with mire in time of rain. At Damascus, when a violent rain happens to fall, the whole city, by the washing of the houses, becomes as it were a quagmire.^k So great is the quantity of dust and mire which sometimes accumulates in the streets of an eastern city, that the prophet Zechariah borrows a figure from it, of great force and significance in the ear of an oriental, to denote the immense riches of Tyre : “ Tyrus did build herself a strong hold, and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets.”^l The beauty of the figure is lost if we attempt to judge of it by the state of an occidental city in modern times ; but it will not be easy to conceive one more strikingly appropriate, if the streets of an eastern city, choaked with mire, or suffocated with dust, are considered. Dr. Shaw directs the attention of his readers to the same circumstance, the dissolution of oriental buildings upon a shower, and supposes it may illustrate what Ezekiel observes respecting untempered mortar.^m When that traveller was at Tozer, in the month of December, they had a small drizzling shower, which conti-

ⁱ Job xxiv, 16.

^j Egmont and Hayman, vol. i, p. 300.

^k Maundrell's Journey, p. 124, 125.

^l Zech. ix, 3.

^m Ezek. xiii, 11.

nued for the space of two hours; and so little provision was made against accidents of this kind, that several of the houses, which, as usual, were built only with palm branches, mud and tiles baked in the sun, fell down by imbibing the moisture of the shower. Nay, provided the drops had been either larger, or the shower of a longer continuance, he was persuaded the whole city would have dissolved and dropt to pieces.^a In his opinion, the phrase “untempered mortar” refers to the square pieces of clay of which the wall is constructed; but on looking at the text, it is evident that it refers to the plaster which is used in the east for covering the walls after they are built. The words of the prophet are: “And one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar --- Lo, when the wall is fallen, shall it not be said unto you, Where is the daubing wherewith ye have daubed it?” The view which Chardin gives of this text is, therefore, to be preferred. According to that intelligent traveller, the mud walls fall down in consequence of the rain dissolving the plaster. This plaster hinders the water from penetrating the bricks; but when it has been soaked with wet, the wind cracks it, by which means the rain, in some succeeding shower, gets between and dissolves the whole mass. To this external coating of plaster, the prophet certainly refers, and not to the bricks, of which the wall is constructed; for these, however tempered, never can be supposed to resist the action of violent rains.^o The ruinous effect of stormy winds and heavy rains upon such frail structures, is well described in the thirteenth verse, and exactly corresponds with the accounts of modern travellers: “Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, I will even rend it with a stormy

^a Shaw's Trav. vol. i, p. 250.

^o Harmer's Observ. vol. i, p. 287.

wind in my fury ; and there shall be an overflowing shower in mine anger, and great hailstones in my fury to consume it. So will I break down the wall that ye have daubed with untempered mortar, and bring it down to the ground, so that the foundation thereof shall be discovered, and it shall fall, and ye shall be consumed in the midst thereof : and ye shall know that I am the Lord." The same allusion is involved in the prediction of Amos, where he denounces the judgments of God against a profligate and refractory people : " For, behold, the Lord commandeth, and he will smite the great house with breaches, and the little house with clefts." ^p The palaces of the great and the cottages of the poor, seem to have been constructed of the same fragile material ; for they were affected by the storm and the tempest in the same manner, and when the cup of iniquity is full, are dissolved by the same shower.

Many of the oriental buildings, however, have displayed unrivalled magnificence and splendour. The walls, columns, floors and minarets of the mosques were of the choicest marble, granite and porphyry, inlaid with agates and precious stones. The ornamental parts were of gold and silver, or consisted of the most elegant borders, with festoons of fruit and flowers in their natural colours, composed entirely of agates, cornelians, turquoises, lapis-lazuli, and other valuable gems. The hangings and carpets were of the richest manufacture : And the splendid edifice was illumined with chandeliers of massive gold. " How forcibly," says Forbes, " do these remind us of the truth and beauty of the metaphorical language in the sacred page, promising sublime and spiritual joys, in allusion to these subjects in eastern palaces." In the prophecies of

^p Amos vi, 11.

Isaiah this most encouraging declaration is made to the Gentile nations : “ I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones.”^a

In Africa, by the testimony of Dr. Shaw, they beat their mortar with mallets ;^r but in Canaan and the surrounding regions, they trod it with their feet. To this last custom, the prophet clearly refers in his challenge to the heathen gods, to prove their title to divine honours, by disclosing the secrets of futurity : “ I have raised up one from the north, and he shall come ; from the rising of the sun shall he call upon my name ; and he shall come upon princes as upon mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay.”^s The allusion is still more clearly made by the prophet Nahum in his address to Nineveh : “ Draw thee waters for the siege, fortify thy strong holds ; go into clay, and tread the mortar, make strong the brick kiln.”^t To the same custom, although in more obscure terms, the prophet Malachi may be supposed to refer : “ Ye shall tread down the wicked ; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet.”^u In the opinion of some expositors, the wicked are here compared to ashes, because the prophet had been speaking of their destruction under the figure of burning. But the sacred writers, having a much higher object in view than to exemplify the rules of the rhetorician, do not always keep close to the figures with which they set out ; and if they did, Malachi would not have expressed himself in such terms, unless the custom

^a Isa. liv, 11, 12. Forbes's Orient. Mem. vol. iii, p. 103, 104, 144.

^r Trav. vol. i, p. 372.

^t Nahum iii, 14.

^s Isa. xli, 25.

^u Mal. iv, 3.

of treading ashes in making mortar or cement, had prevailed in his days.

The general style of building in the east, seems to have continued from the remotest ages down to the present times, without alteration or any attempt at improvement. Large doors, spacious chambers, marble pavements, cloistered courts, with fountains sometimes playing in the midst, are certainly conveniences well adapted to the circumstances of these hotter climates.^v All the windows of their dwellings, if we except a small latticed window or balcony which sometimes looks into the street, open into their respective courts or quadrangles; an arrangement probably dictated by the jealousy which unceasingly disturbs the repose of an oriental householder. It is only during the celebration of some public festival, that these houses, and their latticed windows or balconies, are left open.^w

The streets of an oriental city, the better to shade the inhabitants from the sun, are commonly narrow, with sometimes a range of shops on each side. People of the same trade occupy the same street. Both in Persia and in Turkey the trades are carried on in separate bazars, in which their shops are extended adjacent to each other on both sides of the building.^x The remark equally applies to Damascus and other cities in the Lesser Asia.^q The entrance from the streets into one of the principal houses, is through a porch or gateway, with benches on each side, where the master of the family receives visits, and dispatches business; few persons, not even the nearest relations, having further admission, except upon extraordinary

^v Malcom's Hist. of Persia, vol. ii, p. 522. Lady M. W. Montagu's Letters, vol. i, p. 209.

^w Shaw's Trav. vol. i, p. 373.

^x Morier's Trav. vol. i, p. 102.

^y Richardson's Trav. vol. ii, p. 466.

occasions.^z The door of the porch by which a person enters the court, is very small ; sometimes not above three feet high. The design of such low and inconvenient doors is, to prevent the Arabs from riding into the houses to plunder them ; for these freebooters, who are almost centaurs, seldom think of dismounting in their excursions ; and therefore, the peaceable inhabitants find such small entrances, the easiest and most effectual way of preventing their violence. To this singular practice the royal preacher may be supposed to refer : “ He that exalteth his gate, seeketh destruction.”^a It can hardly be supposed, that Solomon mentioned the loftiness of the gate, rather than other circumstances of magnificence in a building, as the wideness of the house, the airiness of the rooms, the cedar ceilings, and the vermilion paintings, which the prophet Jeremiah specifies as pieces of grandeur, without some particular meaning. But if bands of Arabs had taken the advantage of large doors to enter into houses in his territories, or in the surrounding kingdoms, the apophthegm possesses a singular propriety and force. We have the more reason to believe that Solomon had his eye on the insolence of the Arabs, in riding into the houses of those they meant to plunder, because the practice seems not to have been unusual in other countries ; and is not now peculiar to those plunderers. The Armenian merchants at Julfa, the suburb of Ispahan, in which they reside, find it necessary to make the front door of their houses in general small, partly to hinder the Persians, who treat them with great rigour and insolence, from entering them on horseback, and partly to prevent them from

^z Shaw's Trav. vol. i, p. 374. Buckingham's Trav. vol. ii, p. 386. See also Malcom's Hist. of Persia, vol. ii, p. 551.

^a Prov. xvii, 19.

observing the magnificent furniture within. But the habitation of a man in power is known by his gate, which is generally elevated in proportion to the vanity of its owner. A lofty gate is one of the insignia of royalty ; and it must have been the same in ancient times. The gates of Jerusalem, of Zion, and other places are often mentioned in the Scripture with the same notions of grandeur annexed to them : thus the Psalmist addresses the gates of Zion ; “ Lift up your heads, O ye gates ; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors : and the king of Glory shall come in.”^b

From the gate of the porch, one is conducted into the quadrangular court, which, being exposed to the weather, is paved with stone, in order to carry off the water in the rainy season. The principal design of this quadrangle, is to give light to the house, and admit the fresh air into the apartments ; it is also the place where the master of the house entertains his company, which are seldom or never honoured with admission into the inner apartments.^c This open space bears a striking resemblance to the *impluvium* or *cava ædium* of the Romans, which was also an uncovered area, from whence the chambers were lighted. For the accommodation of the guests, the pavement is covered with mats or carpets ; and as it is secured against all interruption from the street, is well adapted to public entertainments. It is called, says Dr. Shaw, the middle of the house, and literally answers to the *το μεσον* of the Evangelist, into which the man afflicted with the palsy was let down through the ceiling, with his couch, before Jesus.^d Hence, he conjectures that our Lord was at this

^b Psa. xxiv, 7. Morier's Trav. vol. i, p. 135.

^c See Morier's Trav. vol. i, p. 79, 81.

^d Luke v, 19.

time instructing the people in the court of one of these houses ; and it is by no means improbable, that the quadrangle was to him and his apostles a favourite situation, while they were engaged in disclosing the mysteries of redemption. To defend the company from the scorching sun-beam, or “ windy storm and tempest,” a veil was expanded upon ropes from the one side of the parapet wall to the other, which might be folded or unfolded at pleasure.^e The Psalmist seems to allude either to the tents of the Bedowens, or to some covering of this kind, in that beautiful expression of spreading out the heavens like a veil or curtain.^f We have the same allusion in the sublime strains of Isaiah : “ It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers ; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in.”^g

“ The court is for the most part surrounded with a cloister, over which, when the house has a number of stories, a gallery is erected of the same dimensions with the cloister, having a ballustrade, or else a piece of carved or latticed work, going round about, to prevent people from falling from it into the court.” The doors of the enclosure round the house, as already mentioned, are made very small, to defend the family from the insolence and rapacity of Arabian plunderers ; but the doors of the houses very large, for the purpose of admitting a copious stream of fresh air into their apartments. The windows which look into the street, are very high and narrow, and defended by lattice work ; as they are only intended to allow the cloistered inmate a peep of what is passing with-

^e Forbes's Orient. Mem. vol. ii, p. 459.

^f Psa. civ, 2.

^g Isa. xl, 22.

out, while he remains concealed behind the casement.^h This kind of window the ancient Hebrews called *Arubah*, and is the same term which they used to express those small openings, through which pigeons passed into the cavities of the rocks, or into those buildings which were raised for their reception. Thus the prophet demands: “Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves (אל-ארבותיהם) *el arubothem*, to their small or narrow windows.” The word is derived from a root which signifies to lie in wait for the prey; and is very expressive of the concealed manner in which a person examines through that kind of window, an external object. Irwin describes the windows in Upper Egypt, as having the same form and dimensions; and says expressly, that one of the windows of the house in which they lodged, and through which they looked into the street, more resembled a pigeon hole, than any thing else.ⁱ But the sacred writers mention another kind of window, which was large and airy; it was called (חלון) *halon*, and was large enough to admit a person of mature age being cast out of it; a punishment which that profligate woman Jezebel suffered by the command of Jehu, the authorised exterminator of her family.^j

These large windows admit the light and the breeze, into spacious apartments of the same length with the court, but which seldom or never communicate with one another. In the houses of the fashionable and the gay, the lower part of the walls is adorned with rich hangings of velvet or damask, tinged with the liveliest colours, suspended on hooks, or taken down at pleasure. A correct idea of

^h “The lattices are so constructed,” says Forbes, “as to prevent the rays of the sun, while they admit the light.” *Orient. Mem.* vol. iv, p. 65.

ⁱ P. 185 and 201.

^j Shaw’s *Trav.* vol. i, p. 374, 375.

their richness and splendour may be formed from the description which the inspired writer has given of the hangings in the royal garden at Sushan, the ancient capital of Persia: "Where were white, green, and blue hangings, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple, to silver rings and pillars of marble."^j The upper part of the walls is adorned with the most ingenious wreathings and devices, in stucco and fret-work. The ceiling is generally of wainscot, painted with great art, or else thrown into a variety of pannels with gilded mouldings. In the days of Jeremiah the prophet, when the profusion and luxury of all ranks in Judea were at their height, their chambers were ceiled with fragrant and costly wood, and painted with the richest colours. Of this extravagance, the indignant seer loudly complains: "Woe unto him that saith, I will build me a wide house and large chambers, and cutteth him out windows: and it is ceiled with cedar, and painted with vermillion."^k The floors of these splendid apartments were laid with painted tiles, or slabs of the most beautiful marble. A pavement of this kind is mentioned in the book of Esther; at the sumptuous entertainment which Ahasuerus made for the princes and nobles of his vast empire, "the beds," or couches, upon which they reclined, "were of gold and silver, upon a pavement of red and blue, and white and black marble." Plaster of terrace is often used for the same purpose; and the floor is always covered with carpets, which are for the most part, of the richest materials. Upon these carpets, a range of narrow beds, or mattresses, is often placed along the sides of the wall, with velvet or damask bolsters, for the greater ease and convenience of the company.^l To these luxurious indul-

^j Esth. i, 6.^k Jer. xxii, 14.^l Shaw's Trav. vol. i, p. 378.

gences, the prophets occasionally seem to allude ; Ezekiel was commanded to pronounce a “ woe to the women that sew pillows to all arm holes ;”^m and Amos denounces the judgments of his God against them “ that lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall.”ⁿ At one end of each chamber is a little gallery, raised three or four feet above the floor, with a ballustrade in front, to which they go up by a few steps. Here they place their beds ;^o a situation frequently alluded to, in the holy Scriptures : Thus Jacob addressed his undutiful son, in his last benediction : “ Thou wentest up to thy father’s bed, - - - he went up to my couch.”^p The allusion is again involved in the declaration of Elijah to the king of Samaria : “ Now, therefore, thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.”^q And the Psalmist swore unto the Lord, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob, “ Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed, - - - until I find out a place for the Lord.”^r This arrangement may likewise illustrate the circumstance of Hezekiah’s “ turning his face to the wall, when he prayed,” that the greatness of his sorrow, and the fervour of his devotion, might as much as possible, be concealed from his attendants.^s The same thing is related of Ahab, although we have no reason to think it was upon a religious account, but in order to conceal from those about him the anguish he felt, for his late disappointment ; or, perhaps, by so great a shew of sorrow,

^m Ezek. xiii, 8.^p Gen. xlix, 4.^r Psa. cxxxii, 3.ⁿ Am. vi, 4.^q 2 Kings i, 4, 16.^s 2 Kings xx, 2.^o Buckingham’s Trav. vol. ii, p. 354.

to provoke them to devise some means to gratify his wishes: “And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread.”^t

The eastern beds consist merely of two thick cotton quilts, one of which, folded double, serves as a mattress, the other as a covering. Such was the bed of David, which could easily be carried with himself in it, to the presence of Saul: “Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may slay him:”^u and that on which the paralytic was let down,^v seemed to be of the same kind. It was, therefore, no difficult task which our Lord imposed upon the latter, to take up his bed and go into his house; nor, when properly explained, does it present to our minds an absurd or incongruous idea. No doubt, however, can be entertained, that the number of their mattresses and coverlets was increased or diminished, as more or less warmth might be required, and the proprietors could afford. An eastern bed occasionally consists of four or five parts, richly ornamented. Baron du Tott describes one in which he was expected to sleep, which had neither bedstead nor curtains; but consisted of many mattresses of quilted cotton, about three inches thick, placed one upon another, covered with a sheet of Indian linen, a coverlet of green satin, adorned with gold embroidery, in embossed work; two large pillows of crimson satin, covered with similar embroidery, and a profusion of gold and spangles, resting on two cushions, which served as a back, and were intended to support the head.^w The harlot’s bed, of which she vaunted so greatly, was adorned after this manner: “I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved work,

^t 1 Kings xxi, 4.

^u 1 Sam. xix, 15.

^v Luke v, 19.

^w Memoirs, vol. i, p. 95. Buckingham’s Trav. vol. i, p. 102.

with fine linen of Egypt ; I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.”^x

In the hottest part of the day the orientals retire to rest on their bed, till the cool of the evening summons them again to active life. “The heathens,” says Mr. Blunt, “assigned all the properties and habits of man to their gods, and among the number that of reposing at mid-day. Hence was it unlawful to enter the temples at that hour, lest their slumbers should be disturbed. The goat-herd ventured not to play upon his pipe at noon, for fear of awakening Pan.^y Hence too, the peculiar force of the derision with which Elijah addressed the priests of Baal : ‘And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud : for he is a god - - - peradventure he sleepeth and must be awaked.’^z Accordingly we read that these priests did not despair of rousing their god and enducing him to declare himself, ‘till the time of evening sacrifice.’ At that hour the period allowed for repose had terminated : and when he still continued deaf to their cries, then, and not till then, their cause became altogether hopeless.”^a

When the houses were not contiguous, the staircase, according to the description of some travellers, was conducted along the outside of the house ; but when they were built close together, it was placed in the porch, or at the entrance into the court, and continued through one corner of the gallery, or another, to the top of the house. For the sake of greater privacy, and to prevent the domestic animals from daubing the terrace, and by that means spoiling the water which falls from thence into the

^x Prov. vii, 16.

^y Theocrit. Idyll. i, l. 15.

^z 1 Kings xviii, 27.

^a Blunt’s Vestiges of Ancient Customs, p. 109, 110.

cisterns below the court, a door was hung on the top of the stair, and kept constantly shut. This door, like most others to be met with in those countries, is hung, not with hinges, but by having the jamb formed at each end into an axle-tree or pivot; of which the uppermost, which is the longest, is to be received into a correspondent socket in the lintel, whilst the other falls into a similar cavity in the threshold. Doors with hinges of the same kind are still to be seen in the East. The stone door, so much admired by Mr. Maundrell, is exactly of this fashion, and very common in most places.^a “The staircase is uniformly so contrived, that a person may go up or come down by it, without entering into any of the offices or apartments; and by consequence, without disturbing the family, or interfering with the business of the house. In allusion to this method of building, our Lord commands his disciples, when the Roman armies entered Judea, to “flee to the mountains;” and adds, “Let him that is on the house top, not go down into the house, neither enter therein, to take any thing out of his house.”^b They were commanded to flee from the top of the house to the mountains, without entering the house; which was impossible to be done, if the stairs had not been conducted along the outside of it, by which they could escape.^c

The roof is always flat, and often composed of branches of wood laid across rude beams,^d and to defend it from the injuries of the weather, to which it is peculiarly exposed in the rainy season, it is covered with a strong plaster of terrace. It is surrounded by a wall breast high,

^a Dr. Richardson's Trav. vol. ii, p. 2.

^b Mark xiii, 15; and Mat. xxiv, 17.

^c Shaw's Trav. vol. i, p. 379.

^d Buckingham's Trav. vol. ii, p. 328.

which forms the partition with the contiguous houses, and prevents one from falling into the street on the one side, or into the court on the other.^e This answers to the battlements which Moses commanded the people of Israel to make for the roof of their houses, for the same reason. “When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement (מַעֲקוֹ) for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine house, if any man fall from thence.”^f Instead of the parapet wall, some terraces are guarded, like the galleries, with ballustrades only, or latticed work. Of the same kind, probably, was the lattice or net, as the term (שִׁבְכָה) shebaca seems to import, through which Ahaziah, the king of Samaria, fell down into the court.^g This incident proves the necessity of the law which Jehovah graciously dictated from Sinai, and furnishes a beautiful example of his paternal care and goodness; for the terrace was a place where many offices of the family were performed, and business of no little importance was occasionally transacted. Rahab concealed the spies on the roof, with the stalks of flax which she had laid in order to dry;^h the king of Israel, according to the custom of his country, rose from his bed, and walked upon the roof of his house, to enjoy the refreshing breezes of the evening;ⁱ upon the top of the house, the prophet conversed with Saul, about the gracious designs of God, respecting him and his family;^j to the same place, Peter retired to offer up his devotions;^k and in the feast of tabernacles, under the government of Nehemiah, booths

^e Shaw's Trav. vol. i, p. 380. Russel's Hist. of Aleppo, vol. i, p. 35. Buckingham's Trav. in Palestine, vol. i, p. 122, 147, &c.

^f Deut. xxii, 8. ^h Josh. ii, 6. ^j 1 Sam. ix, 25.

^g 2 Kings i, 2. ⁱ 2 Sam. xi, 2. ^k Acts x, 9.

were erected, as well upon the terraces of their houses, as in their courts, and in the streets of the city.¹ In Judea, the inhabitants sleep upon the tops of their houses during the heats of summer, in arbours made of the branches of trees, or in tents of rushes. When Dr. Pococke was at Tiberias in Galilee, he was entertained by the sheik's steward, and with his company supped upon the top of the house for coolness, according to their custom, and lodged there likewise, in a sort of closet of about eight feet square, formed of wicker work, plastered round towards the bottom, but without any door, each person having his cell.^m In like manner, the Persians take refuge during the day in subterraneous chambers, and pass the night on the flat roofs of their houses.ⁿ

It is extremely probable that Saul, in like manner, was lodged upon the roof of Samuel's house, when he went to consult him about his father's asses; for it appears from the preceding statement, that the inhabitants of Galilee were accustomed to entertain and lodge a stranger whom they respected, upon the top of the house. Our translators, indeed, understood the passage differently; for they make Samuel invite Saul a second time to the roof of the house, before he sent him away: their version runs in these words: "And they rose early; and it came to pass about the spring of the day, that Samuel called Saul to the top of the house, saying, Up, that I may send thee away." But the particle *to*, may be rendered *on*; and the phrase will then be read, he called Saul on the top of the house, where he had slept all night, in an arbour, or

¹ Neh. viii, 16.

^m Harmer's Observ. vol. i, p. 150, &c.

See also Buckingham's Trav. vol. ii, p. 360.

ⁿ Kinnier's Geographical Memoir of the Persian Empire, p. 107.

closet of wicker work, and which he had not yet left. In this light the Septuagint also seem to have understood the passage; for they translate it: "And they spread a bed for Saul upon the house top, and he slept." Samuel might naturally enough wish to converse with his future sovereign a second time, before he allowed him to depart, upon a subject so interesting to them both, and to all the tribes of Israel; but it will appear, from a careful inspection of the text, that they did not go up a second time to the roof of the house, for the moment "Saul arose, they went out both of them, he and Samuel abroad." But a Hebrew never expresses himself in this manner, when he means that one goes up to the roof; the words of the record plainly mean they left the house, and did so without delay. This is confirmed by the next circumstance mentioned in the narrative, which followed immediately: "As they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us." Every circumstance forcibly suggests the idea that, instead of going up to the terrace, they went into the street, and walked down to the end of the city, where the prophet had resolved to impart unto Saul the important message he had received from heaven. Hence the future king of Israel slept on the roof of Samuel's house, and there was called up at the dawn of day, by the faithful servant of the Lord, to receive his inauguration, and return to his father.^o In Persia too they spread their beds, at night, upon the tops of their houses on which they repose, without any other covering than the vault of heaven. They find this much more refreshing than sleeping in a close apartment.^p

^o Harmer's Obs. vol. i, p. 274.

^p Morier's Trav. vol. i, p. 230.

But how pleasant soever the arbour, or wicker closet, upon the roof, may be during the burning heats of summer, it must be very disagreeable in the rainy season. They who lodge in either at that time, must be exposed continually to the storm beating in upon them from every quarter.^a In allusion, perhaps, to this uncomfortable situation, Solomon observes: “It is better to dwell in a corner of the house top, than with a brawling woman in a wide house :”^r in a corner formed with boughs or rushes into a little arbour, which, although cool and pleasant in the dry and sultry months of summer, is a cold and cheerless lodge when the earth is drenched with rain, or covered with snow. The royal preacher, in another proverb, compares the contentions of a wife to the continual dropping of an arbour, placed upon the house top, in the rainy season, than which it is not easy to conceive any thing more disagreeable: “The contentions of a wife are a continual dropping ;” an incessant and unavoidable cause of uneasiness or vexation. Instructed probably by his own feelings, harassed and goaded, as was meet, by the daily quarrels of his seraglio, he returns in a succeeding apophthegm to the subject: “A continual dropping in a very rainy day, and a contentious woman are alike.”^s It appears from these proverbs, that the booths were generally constructed in the corner, where two walls met, for greater safety ; for, on the middle of the roof, they had been too much exposed to the storm. This is confirmed by Dr. Russel, who remarks, in a manuscript note, that these booths in Syria are often placed near the walls ; so minutely correct are even the most incidental observations of the inspired writers.

^a Harmer's Observ. vol. i, p. 276.

^r Prov. xxi, 9.

^s Prov. xix, 13 ; and xxvii, 15.

The custom of walking upon the roof in the cool of the day, to inhale the refreshing breeze, and to survey the surrounding scenery, may serve to explain another scripture incident of considerable interest, which does not appear to have been generally understood. It is thus recorded in the prophecies of Daniel: "At the end of twelve months, he (Nebuchadnezzar) walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon."^t The true sense of the original is, "he walked upon the palace;" but this interpretation our translators have placed in the margin, as more doubtful than the other. If Nebuchadnezzar walked in some apartment of his palace, it is not easy to account for the proud and rapturous exclamation which suddenly burst from his mouth—we can see no proper excitement, no adequate cause; but if we suppose him walking upon the roof of his palace, which proudly rose above the surrounding habitations, and surveying the vast extent, the magnificence, and the splendour, of that great city, the mistress of the world—its walls of prodigious height and thickness—its hanging gardens, reputed one of the most astonishing efforts of art and power—its glittering palaces—the Euphrates rolling his majestic flood through the middle of the place, shut in on both sides by strong bulwarks and doors of brass; it was quite natural for such a man to feel elated with the sight, and indulge his pride and arrogance in the manner described by the prophet.^u

When an oriental city is built upon level ground, one may pass along the tops of the houses from one end of it to the other, and escape into the country without coming down into the street; for the partition walls being only breast high, may be climbed over with ease. The bazars

^t Dan. iv, 29.

^u See Harmer's Observ. vol. i, p. 275.

are terraced, like the dwellings, affording a common road for foot passengers; and wherever a street intervenes, a bridge is thrown over, and the line continues uninterrupted.^v This peculiar structure of the eastern houses, affords another illustration, both of the propriety and practicability of that direction which our Lord gave his disciples to flee to the mountains, without entering their houses, when the Roman armies invaded their country.^w

These statements enable us to explain, in a satisfactory manner, an incident in the history of our Redeemer, which has sometimes excited the profane mirth of unbelievers. It is thus described by the sacred writer: "And they came unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four. And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was; and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay."^x Among other pretended difficulties and absurdities relating to this fact, it has been urged, that, as the uncovering, or breaking up of the roof, as mentioned by Mark, or the letting a person down through it, as recorded by Luke, supposes the breaking up of tiles, spars, rafters, &c. "So," says the infidel, "it was well if Jesus, and his disciples, escaped with only a broken pate, by the falling of the tiles, and if the rest were not smothered with dust." But if the construction of an oriental dwelling be recollected, we shall find nothing in the conduct of these men either absurd in itself, or hazardous to others. Dr. Shaw contends, that no violence was offered to the roof, and that the bearers

^v Morier's Trav. vol. i, p. 321.

^w Shaw's Trav. vol. i, p. 381. De Tott's Mem. vol. ii, p. 342.

^x Mark ii, 3, 4.

only carried the paralytic up to the top of the house, either by forcing their way through the crowd up the staircase, or else by conveying him over some of the neighbouring terraces, and these, after they had drawn away the *σένη*, or veil, let him down along the side of the roof (through the opening, or *impluvium*) into the midst of the court before Jesus. But this ingenious explanation is encumbered with several important difficulties. The natural and obvious idea which the text suggests to the mind is, that the roof of the house was actually opened, and the paralytic let down through the tiling, or roof, into the upper apartment, where Jesus was sitting; while an elaborate process of criticism is necessary to elicit the sense of the learned author; this is a circumstance strongly in favour of the common exposition. Besides, he has produced no proof that *σένη* ever signifies a veil, for which the sacred writers, in particular, employ other words, as *καλυμμα*, *καταπέτασμα*; but its usual meaning is the roof, or flat terrace of a house, and by an easy transition, the house itself.^y Nor has he assigned a sufficient reason for the use of the strong term *ἐξορυσσαντες*, by which he is evidently embarrassed. He endeavours, in the first place, to get quit of it altogether, by observing that it is omitted in the Cambridge manuscript, and not regarded in the Syriac, and some other versions. But conscious it could neither be expunged, nor disregarded upon such authority, he thinks “it may be considered as further explanatory of *ἀπεσένγασαν*; or, as in the Persian version, referred either to the letting down of the bed, or preparatory thereto, to the making holes in it for the cords to pass through.” But the word cannot, with propriety, be considered as a further

^y Shaw's Trav. vol. i, p. 382, 383.

^z Parkhurst, p. 625.

explanation of ἀπεσῆγασαν; for it has quite a different meaning: it signifies to dig out, to break up, or pluck out, and always involves the idea of force and violence; but no violence, and but very little exertion was necessary, to fold back the veil, which was expanded by cords over the court. Nor can it be referred to the removal of other obstructions, for when the veil was removed, no further obstruction remained. It cannot, in this place, signify to tie the four corners of the bed or bedstead with cords, for it bears no such meaning in any other part of the holy Scriptures, or in any classic author; and since it is more naturally constructed with σῆν than with κρᾶσθαιον, it ought to be referred to the former.

Pearce, in his *miracles of Jesus vindicated*, offers another solution; according to him, they opened the trap door, which used to be on the top of the houses in Judea, and which lying even with the roof, was a part of it when it was let down and shut. But with regard to this exposition, Parkhurst justly observes, that the most natural interpretation of ἀποσῆγαζεν, is to unroof, break up the roof, and that the verb is twice used by Strabo, as cited by Elsner and Wetstein, in this sense; which also best agrees with the following word ἐξορυσσάντες.² The history, as recorded by the evangelists Mark and Luke, seems to be this; Jesus after some days absence, returned to Capernaum, and to the house where he used to dwell. And when it was reported that he was there, the people crowded to the square court, about which the house was built, in such numbers that there was no room for them, even though they filled the porch. The men who carried the paralytic, endeavoured to bring him into the court among

² See also Schleusneri Lexicon.

the crowd ; but, finding this impossible, they went up the staircase which led from the porch (or possibly came from the terrace of a neighbouring house,) to the flat roof of the house, over the upper room in which Jesus was, *Καὶ ἐξορυσσάντες* ; and having forced up as much both of the tiles or plaster, and of the boards on which they were laid, as was necessary for the purpose, they let down the paralytic's mattress, *δια τῶν κεραμῶν*, through the tiles or roof, into the midst of the room before Jesus. This operation, under the careful management of these men, who must have been anxious not to incommode the Saviour and his auditory, could be attended with no danger. The tiles or plaster might be removed to another part of the flat roof, and the boards likewise, as they were broken up ; and as for the spars, they might be sufficiently wide to admit the narrow couch of the sick man, without moving any of them from their places. It may be even inferred from the silence of the two evangelists, that the company suffered not the least inconvenience ; and the infidel can produce the testimony of no writer in support of his insinuations. But though we were unable to remove the objection, or silence the ridicule of the unbeliever, it is in every respect better to abide by the natural and obvious sense of the passage. Many of the oriental princes and nobles have a favourite upper chamber to which they retire from the fatigues of state and the hurry of business.^a To such a retired apartment the Saviour and his disciples withdrew to celebrate the passover before he suffered.^b

To most of these houses a smaller one is annexed, which sometimes rises one story higher than the house ; and at other times it consists of one or two rooms only, and a ter-

^a Forbes's Orient. Mem. vol. iii, p. 268.

^b Luke xxvii, 12.

race; while others that are built, as they frequently are, over the porch or gateway, have, if we except the ground floor, which they want, all the conveniences that belong to the house itself. They communicate with the gallery of the house by a door, and by another door, which opens immediately from a privy stair, with the porch or street, without giving the least disturbance to the house. In these back houses, as they may be called, strangers are usually lodged and entertained; and to them likewise the men are wont to retire from the hurry and noise of their families, to be more at leisure for meditation and amusement; and at other times, they are converted into wardrobes and magazines.

This annexed building is in the holy Scriptures named (עליה) aliah; and we have reason to believe, that the little chamber which the Shunamite built for the prophet Elisha, whither, as the text informs us, he retired at his pleasure, without breaking in upon the private affairs of the family, or being in his turn interrupted by them in his devotions, was a structure of this kind. It is thus described by the Shunamite herself: "Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick; and it shall be that when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither."^c The internal communication of this chamber with the Shunamite's house, may be inferred, as well from its being built upon the wall which enclosed her dwelling, as from her having so free access to it, and at the second invitation, standing in the door while the prophet announced to her the birth of a son. The summer chamber of Eglon, seems to have been a structure of the same kind; whose

^c 2 Kings iv, 10.

communication with the street by a private staircase, is clearly ascertained from the unobserved escape of Ehud, after he had revenged Israel of that foreign oppressor: "And Ehud came unto him (Eglon), and he was sitting in a summer parlour, which he had for himself alone. . . . Then Ehud went forth through the porch, and shut the doors of the parlour upon him, and locked them. . . . And Ehud escaped while they tarried, and passed beyond the quarries, and escaped unto Seirath."^d Such also was the chamber over the gate whither David withdrew, for the greater privacy to weep for Absalom, the door of which opened immediately down into the porch. On that mournful occasion, "David sat between the two gates; and the watchman went up to the roof over the gate, unto the wall." When the king received the distressing news of Absalom's death, "he was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept."^e To these may be added, the upper chamber, upon whose terrace Ahaz erected his idolatrous altars; and the inner chamber likewise, or as it is better expressed in the original, *a chamber within a chamber*, where the young man anointed Jehu."^f These were all structures of the like nature and contrivance with the Aleas, or back houses annexed to the dwellings of the wealthier and more fashionable inhabitants.^g

The method of building in the east, may assist us in accounting for the particular structure of the temple or house of Dagon, and the great number of people that were buried in its ruins, by pulling down the two principal pillars upon which it rested.^h About three thousand persons crowded the roof, to behold while the captive cham-

^d Judg. iii, 20.

^e 2 Sam. xviii, 24, 33.

^f 2 Kings xxiii, 12; and ix, 2.

^g Shaw's Trav. vol. i, p. 386.

^h Judg. xvi, 26, 27.

pion of Israel made sport to his triumphant and unfeeling enemies. Samson, therefore, must have been in a court or area beneath ; and consequently, the temple will be of the same kind with the ancient *τεμενν*, or sacred inclosures, which were only surrounded, either in part or on all sides, with some plain or cloistered buildings. Several palaces and *dou-zanas*, as the halls of justice are called in these countries, are built in this fashion, in whose courts, wrestlers exhibit for the amusement of the people, on their public festivals and rejoicings ; while the roofs of these cloisters are crowded with spectators, that behold their feats of strength and agility. When Dr. Shaw was at Algiers, he frequently saw the inhabitants diverted in this manner, upon the roof of the dey's palace ; which, like many more of the same quality and denomination, has an advanced cloister *over against the gate of the palace*,¹ made in the form of a large pent-house, supported only by one or two contiguous pillars in the front, or else in the centre. In such open structures as these, the great officers of state distribute justice, and transact the public affairs of their provinces. Here, likewise, they have their public entertainments, as the lords of the Philistines had in the temple of their god. Supposing, therefore, that in the house of Dagon, was a cloistered building of this kind, the pulling down of the front or centre pillars which supported it, would alone be attended with the catastrophe which happened to the Philistines.²

The extreme heat of the climate, obliged the orientals to fall upon various devices, to ventilate and cool their apartments. For this purpose, they made their doors large, and their chambers spacious ; but they soon found

¹ Esth. v, 1.

² Shaw's Trav. vol. i, p. 392.

that such simple contrivances were insufficient, and that other methods of cooling their habitations were necessary. At Aleppo, this is accomplished by means of kiosks, which are a sort of wooden divans or stages, which project a little way from their other buildings, and hang over the street; they are raised about a foot and a half higher than the floor of the room, to which they are quite open; and by having windows in front and on each side, a great draught of air is produced, which makes them cool in the summer, the advantage chiefly intended by their construction. Another method of cooling their apartments is by ventilators.^k The houses in Persia are ventilated by means of a triangular building which rises far above the terrace roof, and is open at top; it receives the wind in whatever direction it blows: in winter the apartments are warmed by stoves which are constantly supplied with burning charcoal.^l

The summer parlour, or, as Mr. Harmer translates it,^m the chamber of cooling, in which Eglon the king of Moab was sitting, when Ehud arrived with his present, was refrigerated by some of these contrivances; and it may naturally be supposed, that the ventilators, the cupola, and other devices for producing a current of air in their chambers, were first employed in the palaces of kings and princes, and probably introduced at a very remote period. They were certainly known in the time of Eglon, as the name of his apartment, the chamber of cooling, clearly shews.

In the oriental regions, the oppressive heat requires the

^k Russel's Hist. of Aleppo, vol. ii, p. 83.

^l Malcom's Hist. of Persia, vol. ii, p. 523, 525.

^m Observ. vol. i, p. 260.

members of the same family, in general, to occupy each a separate bed. This, according to Maillet, is the custom in Egypt; where, not only the master and the mistress of the family sleep in different beds in the same apartment, but also their female slaves, though several lodge in the same chamber, have each a separate mattress.ⁿ Yet Solomon seems to intimate that a different custom prevailed in Canaan, and one which the extreme heat of the climate seems positively to forbid: "If two lie together, then they have heat, but how can one be warm alone?"^o Mr. Harmer endeavours to solve the difficulty, by supposing that two might sometimes occupy one bed for medicinal purposes.^p It is certain that, in the case of David, it was thought a very efficacious method of recalling the vital warmth when it was almost extinguished. But it is probable that the royal preacher alluded rather to the nipping cold of a Syrian winter, when the earth is bound with frost and covered with snow, than to the chilling rigours of extreme old age. The cold in winter is very severe during the night in that country. Even in the day time it is so keen, that Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, had a fire burning before him on the hearth, when he cut the scroll in which the prophecies of Jeremiah were written, and committed it to the flames. This accounts in the most satisfactory manner for the remark of Solomon; for nothing surely can be more natural than for two to sleep under the same canopy during the severe cold of a wintry night. The same desire of comfort, one would think, which induces them to separate in the summer, will incline them, at least occasionally, to cherish the vital heat by a nearer approximation than sleeping in the same

ⁿ Lett. ii, p. 124. ^o Eccl. iv, 17. ^p Observ. vol. i, p. 270.

room. It is usual, through the east, for a whole family to sleep in the same apartment, especially in the lower ranks of life, laying their beds on the ground. To this custom our Lord alludes in the parable: "He from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not; the door is now shut, and my children are now with me in bed;" that is, my whole family are now a-bed in the same room with me: "I cannot rise to give thee."^q

The houses in the east were, from the remotest antiquity, lighted with lamps; and hence it is so common in Scripture to call every thing which enlightens the body or mind, which guides or refreshes, by the name of a lamp. These lamps were sustained by a large candlestick set upon the ground.^r The houses of Egypt, in modern times, are never without lights; they burn lamps all the night long, and in every occupied apartment. So requisite to the comfort of a family is this custom reckoned, or so imperious is the power which it exercises, that the poorest people would rather retrench part of their food than neglect it.^s If this custom prevailed in Egypt and the adjacent regions of Arabia and Palestine in former times, it will impart a beauty and force to some passages of Scripture which have been little observed. Thus, in the language of Jeremiah, to extinguish the light in an apartment, is a convertible phrase for total destruction; and if it was the practice in Judea, as in modern Egypt, which can scarcely be doubted, to keep a lamp continually burning in an occupied apartment, nothing can more properly and emphatically represent the total destruction of a city, than the extinction of the lights. "I will take from them, the light of a candle;

^q Luke ii, 17.

^r Fleury's Manners, &c. p. 80.

^s Maillet, Lett. ix, p. 10, 11.

and this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment." Job describes the destruction of a family among the Arabs, and the desolation of their dwellings, in the very language of the prophet: "How oft is the candle of the wicked put out, and how oft cometh their destruction upon them."^s Bildad expresses the same idea, in the following beautiful passage: "Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine." The light shall be dark in his tabernacle, and his candle shall be put out with him."^t A burning lamp is, on the other hand, the chosen symbol of prosperity, a beautiful instance of which occurs in the complaint of Job: "Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me, when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light, I walked through darkness."^u When the ten tribes were taken from Rehoboam, and given to his rival, Jehovah promised to reserve one tribe, and assigns this reason, "that David my servant may have a light always before me in Jerusalem."^v The orientals in fitting up their houses, were by no means inattentive to the comfort and satisfaction arising from order and method. Their furniture was scanty and plain; but they were careful to arrange the few household utensils they needed, so as not to encumber the apartments to which they belonged. Their devices for this purpose, which like every part of the structure, bore the character of remarkable simplicity, may not correspond with our ideas of neatness and propriety; but they accorded with their taste, and sufficiently answered their design. One of these consisted in a set of spikes, nails,

^s Job xxi, 17.^u Job xxix, 4.^t Job xviii, 5, 6.^v 1 Kings xi, 26.

or large pegs fixed in the walls of the house, upon which they hung up the moveables and utensils in common use, that belonged to the room. These nails they do not drive into the walls with a hammer or mallet, but fix them there when the house is building; for if the walls are of brick, they are too hard, or if they consist of clay, too soft and mouldering, to admit the action of the hammer. The spikes, which are so contrived as to strengthen the walls, by binding the parts together, as well as to serve for convenience, are large, with square heads like dice, and bent at the ends so as to make them cramp irons. They commonly place them at the windows and doors, in order to hang upon them when they chuse, veils and curtains, although they place them in other parts of the room, to hang up other things of various kinds.^w The care with which they fixed these nails, may be inferred, as well from the important purposes they were meant to serve, as from the promise of the Lord to Eliakim: “And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place.”^x Pins and nails, Dr. Russel observes in a manuscript note, are seldom used (at Aleppo) for hanging clothes or other articles upon, which are usually laid one over the other, on a chest, or particular kind of chair. This intelligent writer does not refuse that they are occasionally used in modern times; and it is evident from the words of the prophet, that it was common in his time to suspend upon them the utensils belonging to the apartment: “Will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon?”^y The word used in Isaiah for a nail of this sort, is the same which denotes the stake, or large pin of iron, which fastened down to the ground

^w Harmer's Observ. vol. i, p. 290.

^x Isa. xxii, 23.

^y Ezek. xv, 3.

the cords of their tents. These nails, therefore, were of necessary and common use, and of no small importance in all their apartments; and if they seem to us mean and insignificant, it is because they are unknown to us, and inconsistent with our notions of propriety, and because we have no name for them but what conveys to our ear a low and contemptible idea. It is evident from the frequent allusions in Scripture to these instruments, that they were not regarded with contempt or indifference by the natives of Palestine. “Grace has been shewed from the Lord our God,” said Ezra, “to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place;”^z or, as explained in the margin, a constant and sure abode. The dignity and propriety of the metaphor appears from the use which the prophet Zechariah makes of it: “Out of him cometh forth the corner, out of him the nail, out of him the battle bow, out of him every oppressor together.”^a The whole frame of government, both in church and state, which the chosen people of God enjoyed, was the contrivance of his wisdom and the gift of his bounty; the foundations upon which it rested; the bonds which kept the several parts together; its means of defence; its officers and executors, were all the fruits of distinguishing goodness; even the oppressors of his people were a rod of correction in the hand of Jehovah, to convince them of sin, and restore them to his service.^b

Fires in winter are used but for a little while at Aleppo, which is considerably farther to the north than Jerusalem; and some there use none at all.^c The inhabitants of Egypt warm their houses in the same way.^d The use of charcoal

^z Ezra ix, 8. ^a Zech. x, 4. ^b Harmer's Obs. vol. i, p. 290.

^c Dr. Russel's Trav. vol. i, p. 82, 85. ^d Pococke's Trav. vol. i, p. 87.

in brasiers, to warm their large apartments, is rather confirmed by the circumstance mentioned in the gospel of John, that the servants and officers of the high priests, when Christ stood before the council, had made a fire of coals (for it was cold), and they warmed themselves; for this it seems was a fire of charcoal, not of wood. Chardin, agreeably to this idea, supposes that the fire which was burning before king Jehoiakam, in which he burnt Jeremiah's roll, was a pan of coals. In this way, persons of quality warm themselves in Persia, and particularly in Media, and wherever wood is easily obtained. The manner in which they sit, will not allow them to be near a chimney; therefore in those places of the east, they have great brasiers of lighted coal.^e This, Mr. Harmer thinks, is the more probable, that the term (תא) which the prophet uses, occurs no where else in the sacred volume denoting a hearth. The Seventy render it *εσχαρα*, in the Vulg. *arula*, a little altar, a portable grate or brasier. Such contrivances were in use among the ancient Greeks, and are called by Homer *Λαμπτήρες* in the Odyssey, where he says that Penelope's maids "threw the embers out of the brasiers upon the floor, and then heaped fresh wood on them, to afford both light and warmth."

But the words of the prophet are more favourable to the opinion of Dr. Russel that it was a hearth, and not a brasier, near which the Jewish monarch was sitting; otherwise the burning of the wood must have filled the house with smoke. Persons of quality at Aleppo, says the historian, have small winter chambers, which have a chimney and a hearth raised about a foot from the floor; and

^e Chardin's MS. notes, quoted by Harmer, vol. i, p. 341. Malcom's Hist. of Persia, vol. ii, p. 523.

they even place their charcoal in a pan there to avoid the deleterious effects of its fume in a close place. This mode of sitting is no impediment; the divan, or alcove, is formed in the usual manner.^f

The natives of those countries, are careful to decorate their habitations with the choicest products of the vegetable kingdom. The quadrangular court in front of their houses, is adorned with spreading trees, aromatic shrubs, and fragrant flowers, which are continually refreshed by the crystal waters of a fountain playing in the middle. To increase the beauty of the scene, they cover the stairs which lead to the upper apartments with vines, and have often a lattice work of wood raised against the dead walls, upon which climbs a vine, or other mantling shrub.^g This pleasing custom justifies Doddridge in supposing the occasion of our Lord's comparing himself to a vine, might be his standing near a window, or in some court by the side of the house, where the sight of a vine creeping upon the staircase or the wall, might suggest this beautiful simile. This kind of ornament seems to have been very common in Judea, and may be traced to a very remote antiquity. From the familiar manner in which the Psalmist alludes to it, we may suppose it was one of the decorations about the royal palace: "Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about the table. Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord."^h Kimchi, a celebrated Jewish writer, explains the psalm in the same way; and observes that a wife is compared to a vine, because that alone of all trees can be planted in a house. In confirma-

^f Harmer's Observ. vol. i, p. 342, Dr. Clarke's note.

^g Ibid. p. 306, Dr. Clarke's note.

^h Psa. cxxviii, 3.

tion of Kimchi's remark, Dr. Russel says, "It is generally true, if fruit-bearing trees be intended, as the vine is almost the only fruit tree which is planted in the houses; pomegranates are another."

But the orientals were attentive to safety, not less than to convenience and pleasure. To secure their dwellings from the depredations of hostile tribes, that scoured their country in all directions in quest of plunder, they were forced to surround them with lofty walls. This mode of defence seems to have been adopted at a very remote period; for the spies whom Moses sent into Canaan to view the country, reported that the cities were great, and walled up to heaven. The height of these walls, which by a bold oriental figure, dictated by the pusillanimous fears of the spies, are said to reach up to heaven, must have appeared to the people of Israel, unaccustomed as they were to warfare of that kind, and totally unprovided with the means necessary for besieging fortified places, a very serious obstacle to the accomplishment of their wishes. But the magnitude of it may be illustrated with the greatest advantage, from the accounts which modern travellers have given us of the present inhabitants of those deserts, who are much in the same circumstances as the people of Israel were when they came out of Egypt, whose attacks are effectually repelled by the lofty walls of one or two Christian monasteries.

The great monastery of mount Sinai, Thevenot says, is well built of good free stone, with very high smooth walls; on the east side there is a window, by which those that were within, drew up the pilgrims into the monastery with a basket, which they let down by a rope that runs by a pulley, to be seen above at the window, and the

pilgrims went into it one by one, and so were hoisted up. These walls are so high that they cannot be scaled, and without cannon that place cannot be taken.^j

The monastery of St. Anthony in Egypt, says Maillet,^k is a vast enclosure, with good walls, raised so high, as to secure this place from the insults of the Arabs. There is no entrance into it but by a pulley, by means of which people are hoisted up on high, and so conveyed into the monastery. No warlike apparatus which the Arabian freebooters possess, are sufficient for the reduction of these fortified places. The Israelites, not better provided for besieging strong-holds, hastily concluded that the walled cities of Canaan, of which they heard such discouraging accounts, must oppose an unsurmountable barrier to their progress.

It is not to be supposed, that the descendants of Canaan, like the timid monks of Sinai, walled up their gates on the approach of danger, and permitted none to enter the place, but by means of a pulley; but if their gates had not been well secured, the precaution of raising their walls so high had been in vain. One method of securing the gates of fortified places, among the ancients, was to cover them with thick plates of iron; a custom which is still used in the east, and seems to be of great antiquity. We learn from Pitts, that Algiers has five gates, and some of these have two, some three other gates within them, and some of them plated all over with thick iron.^l The place where the apostle was imprisoned, seems to have been secured in the same manner; for, says the inspired historian, “When they were past the first and second ward,

^j Thevenot's Trav. part i, p. 169, 170.

^k Letter viii, p. 321.

^l P. 10.

they came unto the iron gate that leadeth into the city, which opened to them of its own accord."^m Pococke, speaking of a bridge not far from Antioch, called the iron bridge, says, there are two towers belonging to it, the gates of which are covered with iron plates, which he supposes is the reason of the name it bears.ⁿ Some of their gates are plated over with brass; such are the enormous gates of the principal mosque at Damascus, formerly the church of John the Baptist.^o To gates like these, the Psalmist probably refers in these words: "He hath broken the gates of brass;"^p and the prophet, in that remarkable passage, where God promises to go before Cyrus his anointed, and "break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron."^y

But the locks and keys which secure these iron and brazen doors, by a singular custom, the very reverse of what prevails in the west, are of wood.^q The bolts of these wooden locks, which are also of wood, are made hollow within, which they unlock with wooden keys, about a span long, and about the thickness of a thumb. Into this key they drive a number of short nails, or strong wires, in such an order and distance, that they exactly fit others within the lock, and so turn them as they please. The locks and keys which shut the doors and gates in countries adjacent to Syria, are fabricated of the same materials, and in the same form.^r But those cities which were fortified with more than ordinary care, had sometimes bars of brass, or iron. In describing the superior and almost impregnable strength of Babylon, which Cyrus was cho-

^m Acts xii, 10.

^p Psa. cvii, 16.

^q Isa. xlv, 2.

ⁿ Trav. vol. ii, part i, p. 172.

^r Russel's Hist. vol. i, p. 21, 22.

^o Maundrell's Journey, p. 126.

^s Thevenot, vol. ii, part i, p. 143.

sen by the Almighty to subdue, the prophet particularly mentions the gates of brass and bars of iron. According to this view, the emphasis of the following passage is much greater perhaps than is commonly apprehended: "A brother offended, is harder to be won than a strong city; and their contentions are like the bars of a castle," that are extremely difficult to be removed, both on account of their size, and of the strong and durable materials of which they are made.

In the capital of Egypt, also, all their locks and keys are of wood; they have none of iron, not even for their city gates, which may with ease be opened without a key. The keys or bits of timber, with little pieces of wire, lift up other pieces of wire that are in the lock, and enter into certain little holes, out of which the ends of the wires that are in the key have just expelled the corresponding wires; upon which the gate is opened. But to accomplish this, a key is not necessary: the Egyptian lock is so imperfectly made, that one may without difficulty open it with his finger, armed with a little soft paste. The locks in Canaan, at one time, do not seem to have been made with greater art, if Solomon allude to the ease with which they were frequently opened without a key: "My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him."^s

But conscious that all these precautions were insufficient for their security, the orientals employed watchmen to patrol the city during the night, to suppress any disorders in the streets, or to guard the walls against the attempts of a foreign enemy. To this custom Solomon refers in these words: "The watchmen that went about

^s Song v, 4.

the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me ; the keepers of the wall took away my veil from me.”^t This custom may be traced to a very remote antiquity ; so early as the departure of Israel from the land of Egypt, the morning watch is mentioned, certainly indicating the time when the watchmen were commonly relieved. In Persia, the watchmen were obliged to indemnify those who were robbed in the streets ; which accounts for the vigilance and severity which they display in the discharge of their office, and illustrates the character of watchmen given to Ezekiel, who lived in that country, and the duties he was required to perform. If the wicked perished in his iniquities without warning, the prophet was to be accountable for his blood ; but if he duly pointed out his danger, he delivered his own soul.^u These terms, therefore, were neither harsh nor severe ; they were the common appointments of watchmen in Persia.^v They were also charged to announce the progress of the night to the slumbering city : “ The burden of Dumah ; he calls to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night ? watchman, what of the night ? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night.”^w This is confirmed by an observation of Chardin, upon these words of Moses : “ For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night ;” that as the people of the east have no clocks, the several parts of the day and of the night, which are eight in all, are announced. In the Indies, the parts of the night are made known, as well by instruments of music, in great cities, as by the rounds of the watchmen, who, with cries and small drums,

^t Song v, 7.

^v Taylor’s Calmet, vol. iii.

^u Ezek. xxxiii, 2.

^w Isa. xxi, 11.

give them notice that a fourth part of the night is past. Now, as these cries awaked those who had slept all that quarter part of the night, it appeared to them but as a moment. There are sixty of these people in the Indies by day, and as many by night ; that is, fifteen for each division.

It is evident the ancient Jews knew, by means of some public notice, how the night watches passed away ; but, whether they simply announced the termination of the watch, or made use of trumpets, or other sonorous instruments, in making the proclamation, it may not be easy to determine ; and still less what kind of chronometers the watchmen used. The probability is, that the watches were announced with the sound of a trumpet ; for the prophet Ezekiel makes it a part of the watchman's duty, at least in time of war, to blow the trumpet, and warn the people.^x

The watchman, in a time of danger, seems to have taken his station in a tower, which was built over the gate of the city. We may form a tolerably distinct idea of the ancient towers in Palestine, from the description which the sacred historian gives us of one, in the entrance of Mahanaim : “ And David sat between the two gates, and the watchman went up to the roof over the gate unto the wall, and lift up his eyes and looked, and beheld a man running alone. The watchman cried and told the king ; and the king said, if he is alone, there is tidings in his mouth. And the watchman saw another man running ; and the watchman called unto the porter, and said, Behold, another man running alone ; and the king said, he also bringeth tidings.”^y When the tidings were announ-

^x Ezek. xxxiii, 3. Harmer's Observ. vol. i, p. 333.

^y 2 Sam. xviii, 24 ; and xix, 8.

ced, the historian observes, "the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept." It is afterwards added, "Then the king arose and sat in the gate; and they told unto all the people saying, behold the king doth sit in the gate; and all the people came before the king, for Israel had fled every man to his tent."

From this description it appears, that the tower in the entrance of Mahanaim, had two pair of gates, at some distance from each other; in a small room, which was often found by the side of these fortified gates, the door of which opened into the passage between them, sat the king, waiting in fearful suspense, the issue of the contest, for it cannot be supposed he sat in the passage itself, which had been at once unbecoming his dignity, and inconvenient to the passengers entering or leaving the city. We find a watchman stationed on the top of this tower, to which he went up by a staircase from the passage, which, like the roof of their dwelling-houses, was flat, for the purpose of descrying at a distance, those that were approaching the place, or repelling the attacks of an enemy. The observations made by the watchman were not communicated by him immediately to the king, but by the intervention of a warder at the outer gate of the tower; and it appears, that a private staircase led from the lower room in which the king was sitting, to the upper room over the gateway; for by that communication he retired to give full vent to his sorrow. The only circumstance involved in any doubt, is in what part of this building he sat, (for it is evident he continued in some part of the gate), when he returned his thanks to the army, for their exertions in his favour; or in the language of the historian, "spoke to the hearts of his servants," and received their congratulations. It is somewhat uncertain,

whether he gave audience to his people in the upper room, where he lamented in strains so affecting, the death of Absalom, or in the little chamber between the two gates, where he waited the arrival of the messengers, or in some other part of the building. The ancient custom of sitting in the gate on solemn occasions, rather favours the opinion, that David went down from the apartment above the gate, to the chamber in the side of the passage. This custom, which may be traced to the remotest antiquity, is still observed in the east; for when Pococke returned from viewing the town of ancient Byblus, the sheik and the elders were sitting in the gate of the city, after the manner of their ancestors.^z

The fortified cities in Canaan, as in some other countries, were commonly strengthened with a citadel, to which the inhabitants fled when they found it impossible to defend the place. The whole inhabitants of Thebes, unable to resist the repeated and furious assaults of Abimelech, retired into one of these towers, and bid defiance to his rage: “But there was a strong tower within the city, and thither fled all the men and women, and all they of the city, and shut it to them, and gat them up to the top of the tower.” The extraordinary strength of this tower, and the various means of defence which were accumulated within its narrow walls, may be inferred from the violence of Abimelech’s attack, and its fatal issue: “And Abimelech came unto the tower, and fought against it, and went hard unto the door of the tower, to burn it with fire. And a certain woman cast a piece of a millstone upon Abimelech’s head, and all to break his skull.”^a The city of Shechem had a tower of the same kind, into which the

^z Harmer’s Observ. vol. i, p. 352, *et seq.*

^a Judg. ix, 51.

people retired, when the same usurper took it and sowed it with salt.^b These strong towers which were built within a fortified city, were commonly placed on an eminence, to which they ascended by a flight of steps. Such was the situation of the city of David, a strong tower, upon a high eminence at Jerusalem; and the manner of entrance, as described by the sacred writer: "But the gate of the fountain repaired Shallum, unto the stairs that go down from the city of David."^c It is extremely probable, that Ramoth Gilead, a frontier town belonging to the ten tribes, and in the time of Jehu, in their possession, was strengthened by one of these inner towers, built on an eminence, with an approach of this nature. If this conjecture be well founded, it throws light upon a very obscure passage, where the manner in which Jehu was proclaimed king of Israel, is described.^d His associates were no sooner informed that the prophet had anointed him king over the ten tribes, than "they hasted and took every man his garment, and put it under him on the top of the stairs, and blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu is king." Hence, the stairs were not those within the tower, by which they ascended to the top; but those by which they ascended the hill, or rising ground on which the tower stood; the top of the stair will then mean the landing place in the area before the door of the tower, and by consequence the most public place in the whole city. As it was the custom of those days to inaugurate and proclaim their kings in the most public places, no spot can be imagined more proper for such a ceremony, than the top of the steps, that is, the most elevated part of the hill, upon which stood the castle of Ramoth Gilead, in the court of which,

^b Judg. ix, 46.^c Neh. iii, 15.^d 2 Kings ix.

numbers of people might be assembled, waiting the result of a council of war which was sitting at the time, deliberating on the best method of defending the city against the Syrians, in the absence of their sovereign.

Some of these towers, or citadels, were connected with idolatry, having a temple within them, or some apartment devoted to the worship of heathen gods; or, perhaps the whole structure was committed to the patronage and protection of the tutelar deity of the place; or, it might be used as a safe depository, where they laid up the votive offerings made to the idol. The strong hold in the tower of Shechem certainly had some relation to Baal Berith; for it is stated by the historian, "When all the men of the tower of Shechem heard that (the city was taken) they entered into an hold of the house of the god Berith."^d

In the writings of Jeremiah and Amos, a distinction is made between winter and summer houses. Russel thinks they may refer to different apartments in the same house;^e but if the customs of Barbary resemble those of Palestine in this respect, it is better to understand them of different houses. The hills and valleys round about Algiers, according to Dr. Shaw, are all over beautified with gardens and country seats, whither the inhabitants of better fashion retire during the heat of the summer season. They are little white houses, shaded with a variety of fruitful trees, and evergreens, which, besides the shade and retirement, afford a gay and delightful prospect toward the sea. The gardens are all of them well stocked with melons, fruit and pot herbs of all kinds; and (what is chiefly regarded in these hot climates) each of them enjoys a great com-

^d Harmer's Observ. vol. i, p. 359, *et seq.*

^e Ibid. p. 364. Dr. Russel's MS. note.

mand of water.^f In Persia most of the summer houses are slightly constructed and divided into three pavilions at a considerable distance from each other, with canals, fountains and flower gardens in the intermediate spaces: while the winter houses, or palaces in cities, are built of strong masonry, and ornamented at great expense; and palaces, villas, and mosques are often named after their principal embellishments: Thus at Barocke and Ahmedabad are the ivory and silver mosques.^g This account furnishes an easy exposition of a passage in the prophecies of Amos: “I will smite the winter house,” the palaces of the great in fortified towns, “with the summer house,” the small houses of pleasure, used in the summer, to which any foe can have access; “and the houses of ivory shall perish; and the great houses shall have an end, saith the Lord,”^h those that are distinguished by their amplitude and richness, built as they are in their strongest places, yet all of them shall perish like their country seats, by the irresistible stroke of almighty power.

To mitigate the burning rays of a vertical sun, the orientals endeavour to shade their dwellings with the branches and foliage of a spreading tree. When Sir Thomas Row went ambassador to Delhi, he found the dwellings of the inhabitants encircled with tall trees, under whose broad and deep shadow, they enjoyed a degree of coolness unknown to those in more exposed situations. In some places, their cities had the appearance of being situate in the midst of a forest, whose irregular plantations, reared by the hand of nature, seem to retain almost

^f Shaw's Trav. vol. i, p. 86, 87.

^h Amos iii, 19.

^g Forbes's Orient. Mem. vol. iii, p. 164.

ⁱ P. 399.

all their native wildness. The houses in Egypt are sheltered in the same manner; every village is shaded by a small wood of palm trees; and in Barbary, the country seats are screened from the sun, by a variety of fruitful trees and evergreens.^j From several hints in Scripture it appears, that the same custom of pitching their tents, or building their houses under the shade of a tree, prevailed in Palestine from the earliest times. Deborah the prophetess had her dwelling under the palm tree, between Ramah and Bethel; and Jericho was called the city of palm trees, because it was encircled with extensive plantations of that species: while perhaps every vacant spot within the walls, as in many cities of Hindostan, was crowded, and every street and alley lined, with that beautiful and valuable tree. But the frequent use of the expression, to dwell every man under his vine and under his fig tree, seems to intimate, that these species of trees were most commonly preferred by the people of Israel, for shading their dwellings. We may discover, perhaps, a reason for this preference, in the peculiar circumstances of that people. The whole surface of Canaan, which was not very extensive, was, by the command of God, surveyed and divided into small inheritances, the produce of which could do little more than furnish to each family a frugal supply of necessaries. It therefore became an object of great importance, to multiply and increase the means of subsistence as much as possible; to suffer no ground to lie waste, but to make every corner put forth to the utmost its productive powers. For this reason, the chosen people, formed, by that wise and gracious arrangement, to permanent habits of frugality and diligence, raised

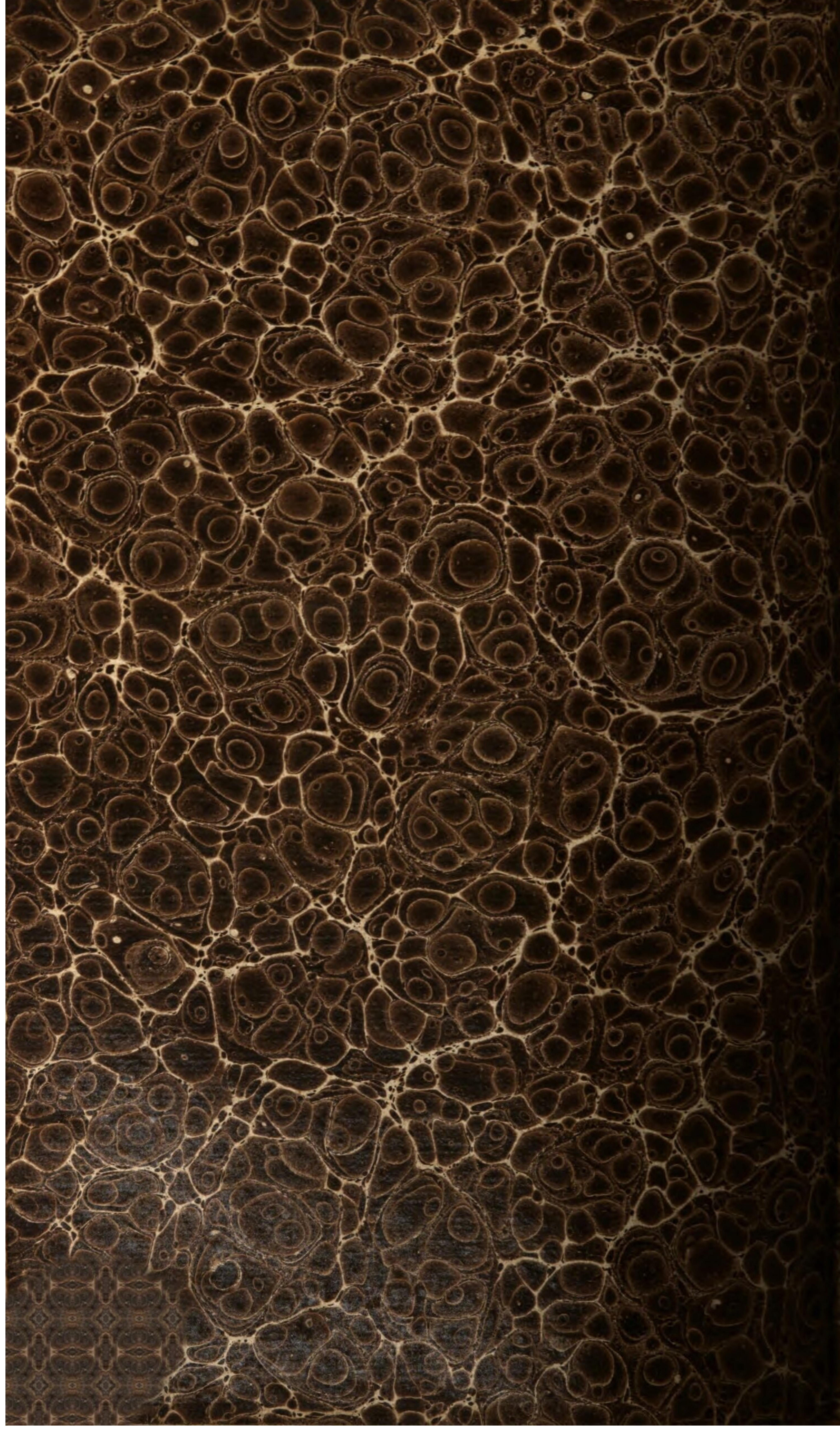
^j See du Tott's Mem. part iv, p. 63.

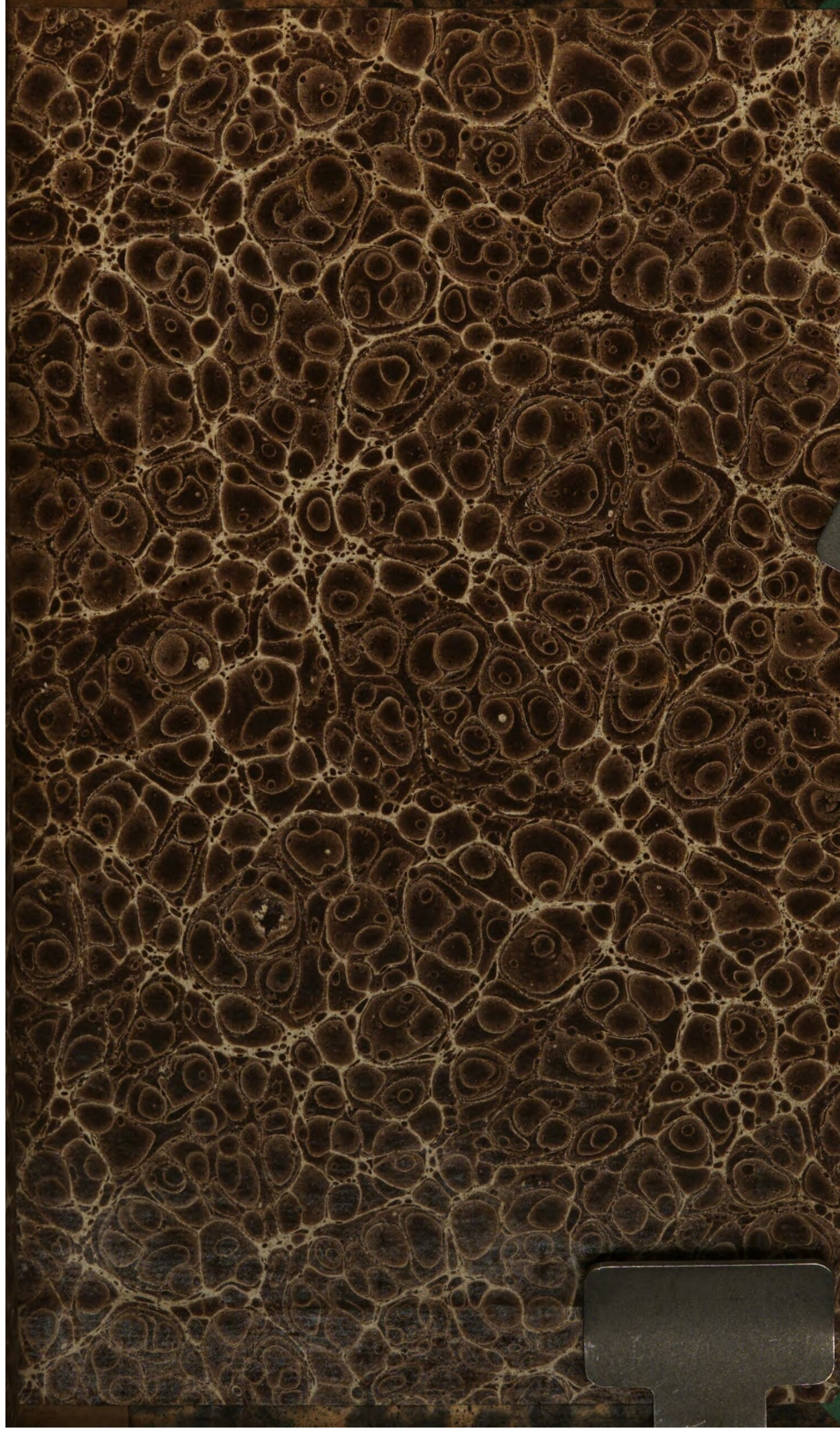
their habitations under the shade of the palm tree, or when the nature of the soil was more favourable to the cultivation of the vine and the fig, beneath their covert, where they found at once a delightful shelter and a delicious repast.

END OF VOL. II.

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